

Art. Berlioz
168 Chabrier
185 Lieroot, Tailleferre *Greg. H*

disques

JUNE
1931

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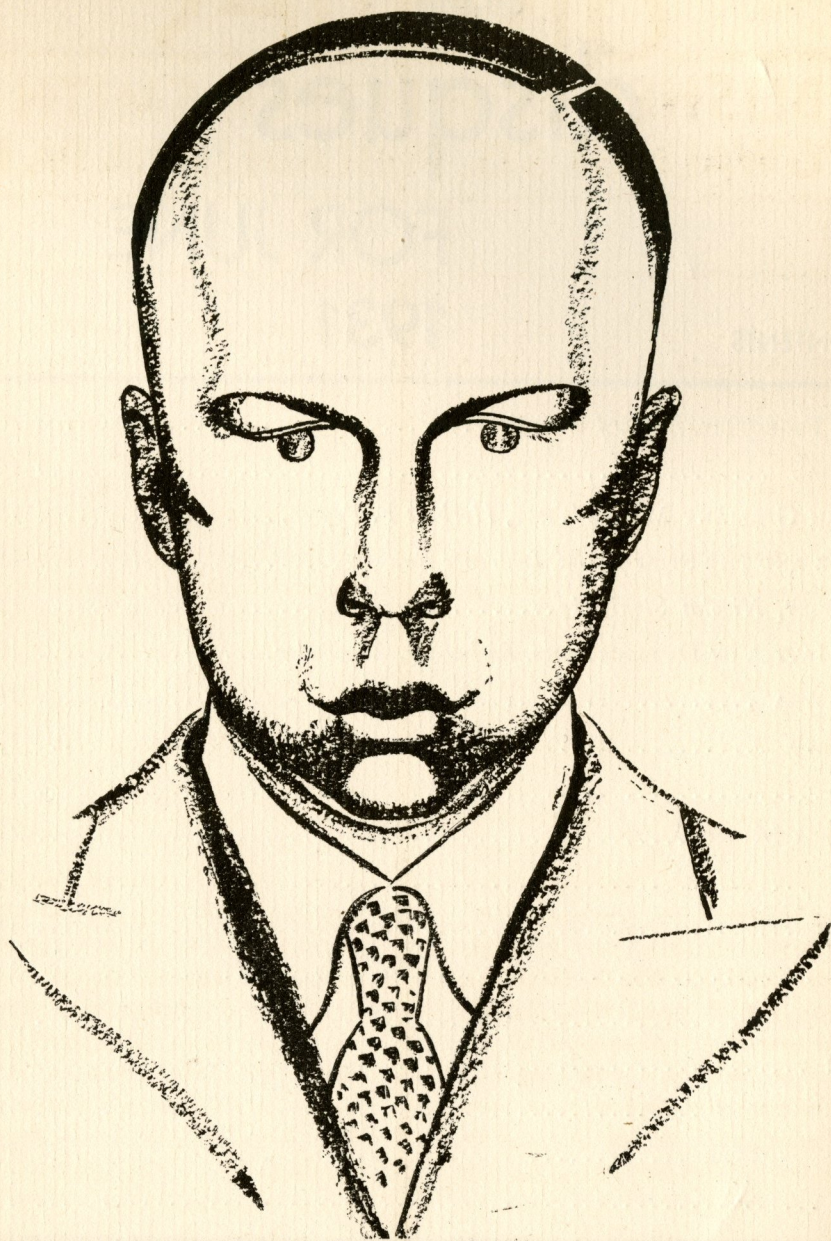
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FOR JUNE 1931

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THE phonograph has frequently been compared to the printing press, but it is disheartening to note how grossly it is overlooked by so many prominent music critics, who logically should be the first to take advantage of the illimitable opportunities afforded by records. By so doing they could make their writings infinitely more comprehensible and valuable to a constantly increasing number of their readers. They could increase their audience, and at the same time be of a great deal more value to that audience. Perhaps, in time, they would be as widely read and occupy—in the mind of the average reader—as important and dignified a position as the literary critics. The reason they don't now is surely not their fault—that is, it doesn't in any way reflect upon their ability and professional competence, which, in point of fact, are not infrequently of a considerably higher type than those encountered in the average literary critic. Literary critics, for one thing, can be checked up upon by nearly everyone, simply by reading the books they discuss. It is thus possible to find out what they are talking about. Sometimes it is diffi-

cult, and often downright impossible, to check up on a music critic; it isn't always possible to hear the music he discusses. Most of us have no accurate method of determining whether what he says is sound and true or idiotic and false—not, that is, until we have an opportunity to become familiar with the music. And sometimes that is impossible. So, for better or worse, we commonly decide that matter by the writer's literary skill, which has nothing whatever to do with the music. If it is subtle and cunning and persuasive, we are properly impressed, and in consequence tend to accept more or less without question the opinions which that style sets forth so charmingly. If it is clumsy and dull and labored, we toss it aside, unread and unconsidered. The music in either case is quite forgotten. When a critic discusses a certain phase of *Pelléas and Mélisande*, say, it is interesting and valuable chiefly to those of us who either know the opera thoroughly or expect to have an opportunity shortly to know it. But if, in his discussion, the critic illustrates his points by mentioning the records in which illustrations of

his points occur, we all have it in our power to verify his statements; we have only to listen to the records. Despite the fact that a good deal of fine music is played in the large centers of the United States, and despite the rosy optimism that currently prevails as to the rapidly increasing growth of musical appreciation in this country, we are still confronted by the melancholy fact that a large number of intelligent Americans, living in forlorn and out-of-the-way places, seldom if ever get a chance to hear good music competently performed; most of them, indeed, never hear it performed at all, competently or otherwise. The wiser and more alert of these people, of course, now console themselves as best they can with the phonograph. It is to them, one suspects, that the instrument means the most. To them, if they are genuine music lovers, it is a vital necessity, an irreplaceable essential, for it supplies the only music they ever hear. The boons the phonograph has brought these people are really incalculable. It may conceivably be a vital necessity to the city-dweller, too, but his case would not be altogether tragic if he were deprived of his instrument; he would still have concerts, opera, and recitals to fall back upon. But those unfortunates out in the wastelands, deprived of the phonograph, would have nothing.



Thus music critics could give their writings especial point and relevancy to many of us if they would, whenever possible, utilize phonograph records as illustrations. This practice is now fairly widespread in Europe, where the phonograph is regarded less timorously than it is in America and accordingly is given the dignity and importance its merits fully warrant, and it occasionally pops up in America, but not nearly so often as it ought to. Music critics, in their heroic efforts to give us a plausible description of a piece of music, have acquired an impressive skill and facility at the business, but they are all doomed from the start to an ungrateful task. It is a platitude, of course, that there are no words sufficiently eloquent and expressive to describe a piece of music adequately; it is a platitude, but nonetheless one that holds somewhat more than the ordinary platitude's amount of truth. The more gifted and skilful of music critics can suggest and vaguely describe and throw out significant hints—that, and no more. They can scarcely make a piece of music seem so vivid to us as literary critics can a piece of literature. The reasons for this, of course, are sufficiently obvious, and need not detain us here. Unless we have already heard the music and see and hear things in much the same manner as that particular critic sees and hears things, it is hardly likely that the description of the music—no matter how felicitously written—will convey anything very definite and tangible to us. What we chiefly notice and admire is the writer's skill at putting words together; whether those words are relevant and apposite and entirely appropriate is another, and frequently overlooked, matter. The supreme function of those words, after all, is to arouse in us a desire to hear the music. If they have succeeded in accomplishing that, they have performed an enormously useful service—perhaps, in the final analysis, their only useful service. Dr. Isaac Goldberg puts it deftly in his *The Fine Art of Living*. "Any writing about music that has a purpose other than to lead the reader directly to the music itself," he says at the beginning of his chapter on music, "is valueless as art. You are not to read these pages, so much as to use them as a stimulus to the hearing of

music. To talk music without hearing it is about as fruitful as to sit in an Eveless desert discussing the beauty of women."



Until comparatively recently music lovers living in inaccessible parts of the world have had to talk and read about music without hearing it. Their conception of it was therefore at best a vague and second-hand one, scarcely of much value. The phonograph has now made it possible for these people to hear the music they have hitherto only read and talked about. They can now decide for themselves whether what they read was sound or misleading. These people, in fine, constitute perhaps the most widespread and diverse audience of music lovers to be found anywhere. Their intelligence is quite as high as that of the fashionable crowds that throng the large concert halls and make gaudy the Metropolitan. When will the critics realize that this audience is in pressing need of their attention? When will they appreciate the fact that this audience, living in all parts of the country and composed of all sorts of people, is not to be sniffed at and is just as worthy of addressing as the thousand or so people—most of whom would rather have been at the movies—who attended last night's actual performance?



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SUBSCRIPTIONS. INDEX AND BOUND VOLUMES

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CODE

The first letters in the record number indicate the manufacturer and all records are domestic releases unless the word **IMPORTED** appears directly under the number: B-Brunswick, C-Columbia, D-Decca, EB-Edison-Bell, FO-Fonotipia, G-National Gramophonic Society, HO-Homocord, O-Odeon, PA-Parlophon, PD-Polydor, R-Regal (English), and V-Victor.

Modern Germany Marks Time

By HERBERT F. PEYSER

Four years ago Germany's chief musical preoccupation was *Johnny Spielt Auf*. All over the map Krenek's jazz opera raged like an epidemic. Its progress was attended by a variety of æsthetic and political consequences. Today *Johnny* has vanished as completely as the snows of yesteryear or the prosperity of the year before. But its journey to limbo has not been a lonely one. *Maschinist Hopkins* and *Jurg Jenatsch* seem to have accompanied it, and the famous *City of Mahagonny*, loaded aboard a *Cardillac*, rumbles in its train down the slopes of perdition. Nor is this the extent of the woeful caravan. On its dusty fringes are others whose names had a more or less familiar ring a short season or two ago. The *Zeitgeist*, like Peer Gynt's Button Moulder, waits at the crossroads, and he is a voracious demon, whose appetite appears to grow by the offerings he feeds on.

The same year that rejoiced in the birth of bold, bad, black *Johnny* witnessed the release of a pleasant, fantastic operatic folk legend called *Schwanda der Dudelsackpfeiffer*. Its composer, Jaromir Weinberger, is a young man a few years Krenek's senior, who enjoys in his native Czecho-Slovakia a reputation chiefly as a collector and arranger of folk music and who once taught composition at the Ithaca Conservatory. *Schwanda* is the fruit of the same tree that bore Smetana's *Bartered Bride*, though Weinberger is not a genius like Smetana and *Schwanda* is not a masterpiece like the *Bartered Bride*. Its ingredients are the honorable and accredited ones of a thousand folk operas, and it has nothing whatsoever to do with the *neue Sachlichkeit* (or "new realism"), whereby a work like *Johnny* lives and moves and has its being. Well, in this year of grace and depression, *Johnny* is as dead as Marley's ghost while *Schwanda*, having weathered four seasons as a best-seller, looks good for at least as many more. Let the modernists explain the outcome of this show-down if they care to.

Statisticians could undoubtedly prove that the percentage of mortality among modern compositions today is relatively no higher in Germany than it is anywhere else. If it seems to be otherwise it is principally because Germany has a way of making more noise in the world, musically speaking, than other countries. The Reich is probably as full of composers now as it ever was. The quality of their output is neither much better nor much worse than the quality of the contemporary output elsewhere. The present trouble with German music is at bottom the same trouble which is afflicting music the world over. I leave it to others to decide whether sterility, disjointed times or warping philosophies are the more to blame or in what measure they blight by interaction. All art, it is said, is viable only so far as it is referable to life and to the eternal verities thereof. The most conspicuous fact about the mass of music being turned out nowadays in Germany is that its chief relation to the life of our age lies in its lack of a central synthesis. In its multiple and contorted way it is the honest reflection of an epoch which does not know what it wants, what it thinks or where it is going. This fact explains the strange, apparently irrelevant variety of styles to which such music shapes itself. It reveals how a *Johnny*, a *Wozzek*, a *Schwanda* and a *Palestrina* can originate almost simultaneously and, for better or worse, flourish side by side. It accounts

for why the majority of modernistic works are so basically artificial that they cease to live the moment they cease to be an issue. I doubt if the contemporary situation has ever had just its like before.

II

The past decade in Germany (and, so far as that goes, in Austria) has been a period of largely inactive time marking, with desperate reversions to the hinterlands of Verdi and Rossini (the Handel operatic renaissance is over). Nothing has happened corresponding in magnitude and sensational excitement to *Johnny*, to *Wozzek*, to *Cardillac*, to *Mahagonny* of an earlier day. Nobody has brought forward anything to replace any one of these as it faltered or died. To what degree the world's economic and social woes have checked or discouraged production I am not prepared to say. But I do know that nobody has blazed new trails or opened up new leads. The order of the day (so far as the day has any order) is feeble retrospect and bootless imitation. The Young Pole, Karol Rathaus, for instance, looks back to *Maschinist Hopkins* and produces a desperate farrago called *Fremde Erde*—a thing it took the Berlin Staatsoper a pot of money and a year of rehearsing to prepare and yet which, as I write, seems to have disappeared for good and all. Then Mark Lothar, an undiscourageably prolific purveyor of mediocre operas, who is still this side of thirty, "adapts" Ben Jonson's *The Silent Woman* as a two-act opera, *Lord Spleen*. It was not "rare Ben," however, who really inspired young Lothar. That doubtful honor, if the truth must be told, belongs rather to Ernst Krenek. For *Lord Spleen* would never have been written if its composer had not discerned a chance to introduce a grand, super-life-size jazz diversion as a finale calculated to out-Johnny *Johnny* seven times over.

So there it blows and thumps and screams at you in a kind of three-level super-cabaret scene, with jazz bands, high-kickers, foxtrotters, motors, railroad cars, radios and aeroplane propellers combining in the din of a kind of modernistic apotheosis. What Lothar did not pause to consider is that *Johnny* consummated this sort of thing once and for all, that everything else of the kind can be, at best, a "throw-back," and that these jazzified and mechanized expedients have all become pretty hopelessly 1927, anyhow. In this respect old Eugen d'Albert was a much cannier business man. For he wrote *The Black Orchid* the moment *Johnny's* stolen fiddle began to sound. And if that costly bloom drooped and died at least two years ago it nevertheless lies very appropriately on *Johnny's* grave.

I do not mean to point to these works of Lothar and Rathaus as specific signs of the times. These men are merely imitators of fancies and devices which in the fullness of their novelty engrossed the popular attention; and the imitator and the epigone are common to every age. The only thing I marvel at is the inability of these young bloods to perceive how quickly tastes and fashions of the sort change, and how soon a thing like *Johnny* becomes desperately "old hat." Hindemith's *Cardillac* and Alban Berg's *Wozzek* stirred up a quantity of dust a few seasons back. Where are they now? I understand there is to be a production of *Wozzek* in Frankfurt sometime this Spring. Be this as it may, I do know that Berlin—which may, I think, be regarded as a tolerably representative musical center—has not had a solitary performance of either of these works this past year. Otto

Klemperer, at the Kroll Opera, has made several efforts since last Spring to keep above water Hindemith's *Neues vom Tage* and the ten minute skit *Hin und Zurück*. Yet time and again *Neues vom Tage* has been withdrawn at the eleventh hour because of the bad advance sale—a particular catastrophe at the Kroll, which the Prussian state has found too expensive a luxury to continue after next September—and some tried old favorite has been substituted. *Neues vom Tage* undoubtedly boasts a certain Hindemithian cleverness. But, strangely enough, Hindemith seems not to have been aware that cleverness running to nearly three hours' length is a pretty fair imitation of dullness. It was probably a sound instinct of preservation that caused him to write a concert ending for the Overture. It is a trifling enough business, this Overture, but at least when you have heard it you have heard the opera. Hindemith might have made a tolerably viable little entertainment of the piece if he had had the wit to compress it to something like the dimensions of *Hin und Zurück*. That little conceit, on the other hand, is quite amusing to read and not at all amusing to watch.

III

I run now and then across a performance of Krenek's *Life of Orestes*—quite the most torturing bore I have experienced even in a lifetime burdened with *Palestrina*, *Fremde Erde*, *Lord Spleen* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten*—but in a short year Kurt Weill's *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* has already ceased to rise and fall. Even *Johnny* has a better record than this. Kurt Weill, however, is a name which the Germans pronounce with respect. The reason for this is not to be sought in tendencies or gifts that raise him to so much higher a level than Krenek or Hindemith or Berg or the rest of them, but in the fact that, in company with his librettist Bert Brecht, he appealed beyond the specifically musical public when he wrote the *Dreigroschenoper*—that abominable, jazzified perversion of *The Beggar's Opera*, to which, in reality, John Gay's historic masterpiece contributes no more than a few mispronounced names and the outline of a plot. In a great many respects the *Dreigroschenoper* falls in the category of operetta, and it is the theatergoers rather than the music lovers who have made its fortune. Its "songs" (in German theatrical parlance modern cabaret and operetta numbers are called by the English word "songs," and you cannot make a contemporary German understand that we mean by "song" the same thing that he means by *Lied*) are published like any popular *Schlager* (hit) of the hour and are in the repertory of the best dance orchestras. Unquestionably Kurt Weill has gained the public ear as Krenek and Hindemith have never managed to do. Yet he and his *Dreigroschenoper* and the humor of Bert Brecht are, I am convinced, entirely local enthusiasms—as restrictedly geographic, so to speak, as the incorrigible affection for an opera like d'Albert's *Tief-land* and the incredible esteem harbored in almost all corners of Germany for a solemn old bore like Hans Pfitzner. Since *Mahagonny* Messrs. Weill and Brecht have made no large scale efforts to consolidate their position. Instead, they have tried to develop in the general musical style of the *Dreigroschenoper* what they call the "school opera"—small works, intended for presentation by school children. In this attempt they have been lucky enough to start a kind of fad and "school operas," or the promise of such, have emanated from several other quarters.

Perhaps I ought, in speaking of imitators, to have mentioned people like Erwin

Dressel, who some years ago made Columbus a figure in a kind of amateurish lyrical "history," that oscillated distressingly between Viennese operetta, jazz, Wagner, Moussorgsky and Strauss; and of Ludwig Roselius, a young scion of a wealthy family who, observing the progress of the Verdi renaissance in Germany, bestirred himself and confected most inexpertly a wan but overloaded tragedy about the Venetian Doge, Marino Faliero. The Staetische Oper of Berlin was imprudent enough to bring both of these works to a hearing and reaped for its reward such venomous abuse as has rarely been the lot of even a municipal opera house in an age of ruptured budgets and howling bankruptcies. In Düsseldorf Manfred Gurlitt, the son of a Berlin art dealer, produced a lyric drama modelled on *Wozzek* and called *Der Soldat*, which was well spoken of in the provincial press. In Wiesbaden Hugo Heermann exhibited a Hindu opera called *Vasantasena*, with a libretto by the novelist, Lion Feuchtwanger. But Heermann is not one of the modernist company, and his work was feeble without even the advantage of posing anything that might be construed as a problem. Dallying in the temples of the older gods are likewise Paul Graener and Ernst von Reznicek.

Meanwhile no newcomers have arisen to challenge Schönberg, Hindemith, Krenek, Max Brand, Ernst Toch, Alban Berg. These men, as I intimated above, are just now showing no signs of inflammable industry. Schönberg is known to be working on an oratorio, but that will be sufficient unto the day that first hears it. In the way of novelty or of partial novelty I have heard of his this past Winter in Berlin only a concatenation of four short movements for strings called *Music for a Movie Drama* and purporting to delineate fear, horror and a catastrophe of some sort; also, an orchestral suite. I remain unshakable in my belief that there is nothing at all in this poisonously ugly music outside of the skill with which Schönberg has applied the principles of his arbitrary twelve-tone scale system—and for saying this let my betters, if they will, write me down a Philistine till I wither of scarlet shame in the sight of men! There seems little disagreement even among habitually disagreeing German factions that in these works Schönberg has gone uncompromisingly "asozial" and in this opinion I find myself heartily able to concur (let me explain by way of enlightenment that in Germany a composer is "sozial" when most people understand him and "asozial" when most people don't). Hindemith has been lying low and saying very little. Toch uttered an opus called *Music for the Theatre*—a terribly banal and empty effusion, which the public justly hissed and the critics unjustly praised.

IV

The remainder of the modernist legion seems to be resting on its oars, as if uncertain which way to turn next. None of them has done anything in the past twelve months that has aroused the German people as much as Hans Pfitzner's orchestral and choral setting of a number of poems on death under the collective title *Das Dunkle Reich*. It is one of the extraordinary paradoxes of German musical taste that an age which agitates itself about Krenek, Hindemith and Schönberg should still look upon Max Reger as a live issue, lose itself in speculations over Franz Schreker and worship with a passionate sincerity of devotion every note that Pfitzner writes. The cult of Reger and of Pfitzner is simply the outward evidence of that immemorial pedantry from which the German mind has never been

able to shake itself free. A high official of the Berlin State Opera told me not long ago that it was necessary to retain in the repertory a work of the colossal dullness of *Palestrina* for the "artistic dignity of the institution." Pfitzner is now writing another opera called, if I am not mistaken, *The Heart*, and the opera houses of the country are ready to pounce on it at an instant's notice. Pfitzner is indisputably a master of the academic technique of composition. There is scarcely a bar he writes that might not have been written forty years ago. *Das Dunkle Reich* is in every seam and crevice a product of the cold, astringent intelligence which conceived *Palestrina* and the cantata *Von Deutscher Seele*. Yet from this sterile cerebration these people seem almost to draw the high satisfaction of a spiritual nourishment. There seems to exist all over Germany an immutable conviction that the granitic intellectuality of music like Pfitzner's and Reger's is identical with emotional depth. This conviction is racial and defies every effort to undermine or eradicate it. The best way to enjoy a work like *Das Dunkle Reich* is to be born a German—or, at least, with the German's intuitive reverence for pedantry in the abstract!

Berlioz and the Stiff-Room

By LAURENCE POWELL

When Berlioz, as a young man, left his parental home at La Côte Saint-André in the South of France, it was to study medicine in Paris at the instigation of his physician father. It was not long before young Hector found himself revolted at the idea of dissecting corpses; he detested the "stiff-room" from the depths of his being and finally, deciding that an angry father and an empty pocket were preferable, he quit the charnel house and gave himself up to his passion, music. Disillusionment was only lurking 'round the corner, and he soon discovered that music is not so very far removed from medicine after all. He soon discovered that he had not escaped the "stiff-room" but had entered it for life, to watch the cold and calculated dissection of every child of his musical brain by surgeons Cherubini, Fetis and Mendelssohn as long as they lived, and later by their successors in the person of nearly every academic since that time.

The more you compare music with medicine the more apparent will their affinity become. It is an unfortunate fact that you cannot teach the art of music without breaking it up into various component elements such as harmony, counterpoint, form, orchestration and so forth, and the average man, in teaching these, eventually loses sight of the true nature of music and indeed of all art. The academic is like a professor of surgery who has spent so long cutting up corpses that he has forgotten what a living body looks like. The academic has forgotten that music is nothing in the world but entertainment; something growing out of delight in the creative artist and something productive of delight in the hearer. Typical of the academic attitude is the following from a recent article "Is Music Art or Entertainment?" by Sir Richard Terry, the renowned Tudor music scholar: "Until we can shake ourselves free of the accepted convention that music is primarily concerned with *entertainment* (*italics his*) we shall never enter into the full conception of her as an art." This is certainly putting the cart before the horse, because if ever the masses ceased regarding music as an entertainment it would probably be the end of music:

it would certainly be the crack of doom for music if her creators began regarding the act of composition as anything but recreation.

All art is recreation, whether it be Gothic architecture, a stupendous novel, an epic poem or a symphony; it is the foil to the practicality of science; it is the toy of the highest intelligences. By saying this I am by no means casting art from her pedestal; on the contrary I am placing her on an equal level with science and proving that they are complementary to one another. Without an intelligent form of recreation science would end in insanity, and man's evolution would become dissolution because it is hardly to be supposed that bridge, golf, billiards and ball-room dancing would satisfy Einstein, Marconi and Spengler were they the only available forms of recreation. These gentlemen would certainly go insane if there were no recreation intelligent enough to engross their intellects. The academic, in his very narrow conception of the word recreation, would probably shout at me that music cannot be entertainment when it is part of religious ceremonial. St. John Chrysostom can best put him right; he says: "Musicke doth withdraw our mindes from earthly cogitations, lifteth up our spirits into heaven, maketh them light and celestial." Is not this exactly the function of religion? Do not both music and religion re-create the spirit? Our mediæval ancestors never lost sight of the element of entertainment in their religious art, as witness the amusing mystery plays, the grotesque gargoyles leering down from their cathedrals and their use of popular songs of the day as *canti fermi* for their Masses. Go back even to the aboriginals of the race and you will find that their conception of art was always a conception of play. A savage would have said: "Music is art only when it is entertainment."

II

The trouble with the academics in their analysis is that they have allowed science to encroach upon art. Their class-rooms are veritable laboratories or even "stiff-rooms" which are cluttered up with the dry bones of the technique of the day before yesterday which dismal collection goes by the name of Theory: they earn their daily bread by teaching principles that were put out of date by the appearance of *Tristan* seventy years ago, and necessarily so, because as yet no satisfactory potted theory of post-Wagnerian technique has been devised. It is hardly going too far to say that the incipients of this technique are to be found as early as 1830 in Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique*. The academics of that time, alarmed at this new departure and piqued because a wild youth had dared to compose what he called a symphony before having properly digested the recipe book of music concoction, dragged Berlioz into the "stiff-room." They did not even examine his symphony as a living whole, but ruthlessly chopped it up and proclaimed that his harmony was poor, his counterpoint miserable, his form non-existent and his melody banal. Berlioz has never lived down these charges as far as the scholars are concerned, as you can easily find out by consulting such tomes as Vol. VI of the Oxford History of Music. Why worry about Berlioz' lack of form? Has everybody got to force his ideas into rigid bottles like academic fugue and sonata? Berlioz preferred a leather bag which would bulge to the shape of his notions and which actually did assume the most fascinating shapes. As for the banality of Berlioz' melody, it all depends on what you call a good tune. If it means a melody modelled after Haydn, Schubert, Bellini

or Chopin, then Berlioz fell down as a melodist, but if a good melody means a Schönbergian lullaby or an Anthiel antic, then Berlioz was an angelic melodist. By what criterion are we to judge a good tune when "Yes, we have no bananas" rocked the civilized world? Is this a good melody? It comes in the Hallelujah chorus so I suppose the academics think it is. Berlioz called Handel "a barrel of pork and beer," so I presume that he would have thought it was not.

As a matter of fact there are no such things as bad harmony, counterpoint, form or melody judged apart from the living body of the music of which they are a part, any more than there are bad kidneys, lungs and livers when judged as separate entities apart from the living body in which they function. They are bad only when they do not function as part of the whole, when they do not fulfill their purpose. Berlioz' technique does fulfill its purpose within the living body of his music. But it is just the living body of his music that the academics know nothing about: they are the last people in the world to make pronouncements about it because they are fundamentally at variance with Berlioz in their conception of art. As I have shown, they do not know that art is entertainment whereas if ever there was a composer who gave strong evidence of knowing this fact it was Berlioz. What was he doing when he wrote his tone-pictures of witches, orgies of brigands, demons' choruses, rides into hell and the rest if he was not greatly amusing himself and intending greatly to amuse his audiences? If you could have got inside his mind while he was composing, you certainly would not have found him worrying about consecutive fifths, doubled thirds and so forth, but you would soon have become aware of the fact that you were watching something very much like a boy in a "let's pretend" mood imagining he was flying to the moon or perhaps lord of the submarine regions with a shoal of sharks for hunting pack, anyway in an ecstasy of delight where reality does not exist. The mention of academic foibles and sententiousness would be as painful to an artist in this mood as would be the discovery of onlookers by a boy at secret play. All artists when creating are more or less in this ecstatic state, though, of course, I am not to be taken as saying that all composers have definite pictures at the back of their minds. What I am saying is that all creative artists are childlike and naïve. The boy is very obvious in Wagner when he uses a hideous sounding cow-herd's horn to represent the villain Hunding, and when he invents preposterous shrieks for Brünnhilde. There is not a single great composer in whom this boyishness did not exist, and it is a substantiation of my thesis that those composers in whom it is most pronounced are just the ones least understood by the academics. In Beethoven perhaps it is less pronounced, and that may be one reason why he is wearing least well of all the gods of yesteryear. Liszt's boyishness was that of a spoilt boy whose antics were not subconscious, and whose "let's pretend" was always in the nature of showing off: he was a theatrical adolescent lacking the naïveté of childhood. Heine asked: "Is there such a thing in art as genuine originality without naïveté?" and I would ask: "Is there anything more remote from academicism than naïveté?" The academics, the Beckmessers, can only dissect and destroy and have not the faintest idea how to create. They might possibly manage to manufacture fugues, but it would be work for them to do this, and that is exactly what would be wrong with their composing: it would be work while, of course, it should be play, because all art creation is re-creation. It does not matter whether it is Bach writing the B Minor Mass, Mozart pouring

his distressed soul into a string quintet or Tschaikowsky wailing about destiny; it is all done as a recreation of spirit.

III

Since the academics do not know much about this recreation of the spirit and since they fail so lamentably in their assessment of the value of so much music, to whom must we go for fair appraisal of this music? Go to the cultured masses, to that crowd which meets weekly at our symphony concerts and, nowadays, to that ever increasing circle of gramophiles. These masses have more than once proved themselves right and the critics wrong, and notably in the case of Wagner, whose operas they crowded to hear at a time when the Beckmessers were ranting and raving and throwing rotten eggs at the indomitable Richard. The academics' latest fallacy is that the masses must be taught as much about music as possible: they want everybody to learn harmony, counterpoint and form. Why does not the medical profession install a "stiff-room" in every high school in the land so that everybody can know about his body? Fortunately we can still admire our bodies and those of others without this addition to the curriculum, and I think it is quite obvious that the masses can continue to show superior judgment in certain musical matters without being initiated into mysteries that only the greatest creative artists can stand. Theory should only be taught to born composers while the masses might be taught to sing and play. If Beckmesser thinks the masses are stupid then all I can do is to quote Dostoevski at him: "The stupider one is the closer one is to reality. The stupider one is the clearer one is. Stupidity is brief and artless, while intelligence wriggles and hides itself. Intelligence is a knave, but stupidity is honest and straightforward." Stupidity will tell me that Berlioz is great fun and I shall frisk about like Till Eulenspiegel and add "and therefore a great artist."

Prokofiev

By NICOLAS SLONIMSKY

Sergei Prokofiev was forty years old this April. Next year Strawinsky will be fifty. Time itself must be growing old, for was it very long ago that Prokofiev was an *enfant terrible* of music, and Strawinsky a barbarian? At least Strawinsky is turning towards religion as may behoove age. However, Prokofiev at forty remains his timeless self. There are no jumps into the Future in his music, nor any fashionable retreats into the Past.

Prokofiev thus appears as one of the very few composers who should rightfully be called modern. He creates his own style, and this style happens to be expressive of the present. Were not the classics expressive of their times in similar fashion? And with so much talk about classical art, Prokofiev should be the first to receive the enviable title of a "Modern Classic" or "Classical Modernist," and this not because he has written a Classical Symphony but because his progress is classically uncrooked and free of any extraneous reflections.

Yet this very uniformity of Prokofiev's musical line has been the cause of misgivings on the part of some faint-hearted critics. It is true that Prokofiev was born

mature, and that he has preserved his maturity during a third of a century of his creative period. Armed with determination to make a point, we may discover all of Prokofiev's shibboleths in his juvenile "opera" composed at the age of seven.

From that first opera to his latest quartet, opus 50, written for Mrs. Elizabeth S. Coolidge, there is no marked digression from his individual style. Clear diatonic structure, unswerving rhythmic continuity, wide-skipping intervals, tender lyrical line of melody. There is a breath of pagan abandon in such works as *Scythian Suite* and the cantata, *They Are Seven*. The Scythians were the Indians of Pre-historic Russia, nomads that wandered over Russian soil and vanished in some chasm of time. The cantata, *They Are Seven*, takes for a text an ancient Babylonian incantation exorcising the Seven Demons that are ever present, ever penetrating.

In such subjects Prokofiev exhibits unrestrained power, often sacrificing even the clarity of writing, probably his most cherished possession, in order to produce the desired effect. Technically speaking he often resorts to polytonality, not consistently and deliberately as does Darius Milhaud, but rather casually, with the tonal foci never blurred. Prokofiev's diatonic persuasion is individualized further by the choice of the key of C major as a favorite regimen. There are pages and pages in Prokofiev's music that bear not a single accidental. Prokofiev is not the only one who has this strange idiosyncrasy. Casella, quite independently, shows the same preference for "the simplest key." Poulenc and Auric, with less independence, follow the same fashion. It may be that the instrument itself—Prokofiev and Casella are splendid pianists—prompts the composers. Stravinsky, a pianist of but recent date, does not reveal a C major complex.

Still more interesting is Prokofiev's use of pianistic passages suggesting the celebrated collection of exercises *Virtuoso Pianist* by Hanon. It may be a reversion to childhood, a sort of sublimated daily task. Such entries as the ascending figures in the Third Piano Concerto produce a stultifying effect, which somehow is made artistic. A similar effect is achieved by the now fashionable device of iteration, hammering of the same note until a sudden jerk relieves the dulled senses. In conjunction with absolute predominance of duple meters, 4/4 and 2/2, these features form a musical whole of unmistakable individuality. It would be instructive to compute the various ratios indicative of Prokofiev's distribution of scale-notes, use of wide intervals, symmetry of rhythms, etc. If chromaticism is to be measured by the ratio between the number of accidentals and that of scale-notes, Prokofiev's index will be very low, Honegger's (to mention an example) very high—speaking a diatonic and chromatic mind respectively.

On the other hand, enharmonic modulations, usually associated with chromatic structure, are very frequent in Prokofiev's music, but it would be not at all difficult to demonstrate their utterly non-chromatic meaning. Such remarkable works as *Overture on Hebrew Themes* and the *Ugly Duckling* are examples of Prokofiev's crystal clear harmonies. In the Overture Prokofiev makes use of that Oriental interval, the augmented second, but the treatment of the Jewish themes is very Russian, in the direct line of Moussorgsky's great diatonic constructions. In the *Ugly Duckling*, Prokofiev is more limpid still; every passage seems to perform a definite function necessary and sufficient for the composer's particular purpose.

II

Thus we find a two-faced Prokofiev: the Classic and the Barbarian. How can the two be reconciled? Prokofiev sets off a detonation of sound with a huge modern orchestra as his powder house—how then can he be considered a creator of classical “necessary and sufficient” music? How can he be at once frugal, as in the songs to the words of Anna Akhmatova, the most reticent Russian poetess, and then be prodigal, as in some of his “booming” scores? The answer is easy. It is not enough to brand a musician because he puts the big drum into his scores. The classics appreciated the big drum no less than Prokofiev. It is the subject matter and the treatment, not the quantity of the sound, that place Prokofiev amongst pure musicians, that is, among people who follow an independent musical line of thought, never considering a splurge of sound as a justifiable means to an end. The regrettable piece of misinformation concerning the idea behind the composition of the Classical Symphony, namely, that Prokofiev had intended to write it as Mozart would, were he living now, is spurious, and besides makes Prokofiev appear a practical joker. Certainly this symphony was not at all a pastiche à la Mozart, but a very typical work written according to a certain extensive formula, which did not confine the composer in any way to playing the sedulous ape to Mozart. More apt is the opinion of one of the contemporary critics that in the Classical Symphony, particularly in the Gavotte, Prokofiev treats us to a series of harmonic surprises, thumbs his nose at our modulatory anticipations. The Classical Symphony is as typical of Prokofiev’s style as any other score of his.

Much should be written about Prokofiev’s use of orchestral sonorities. At 23, when the *Scythian Suite* was completed, he was a past master of orchestration, but most especially he has contributed to the art of scoring for woodwind instruments. Hindemith and others show cleverness and knowledge—Prokofiev adds charm and, perhaps, some unrevealed secret of his own. Particularly interesting in this respect is the poetic set of variations from the Second Symphony. The treatment of the strings is determined by Prokofiev’s addiction to wide skips and percussion effects accomplished through the use of pizzicato in the high register.

Prokofiev’s orchestration is not only expert and modern—it is peculiar to the art of the composer, and, therefore, inseparable from that art. An important innovation in the *Scythian Suite* is the uniform writing in C for all transposing instruments in the full score. Common sense should have prompted a revision of old and needless complications long ago, but apparently tradition is still very strong—Prokofiev’s initiative finds little support, and scores are published with all transposing instruments in written signs instead of actual sounds. Into the wild extravaganza of his ballets and operas, Prokofiev’s music introduces an organizing element. It seems as if Prokofiev thinks that all scenarios and ballets are necessarily incongruous and that a realistic drama is less real than an obvious sequence of unrealities.

In the *Love for Three Oranges* he introduces some effects à la Pirandello where the actors themselves take to expose the nonsensicality of the whole conception. This device give perfect protection. In the lesser nonsense of his ballet, Prokofiev relies on the accepted worth of folklore or even pseudo-folklore. Even in the *Pas d’Acier*, a ballet which is meant to picture the life in the factories of the U. S. S. R., Prokofiev is cautiously unreal. All this does not bar him from candid

onomatopoeia, such as the swivel passage illustrating the Roulette in the unpublished opera, the *Gambler*.

III

When, in 1927, Prokofiev made a tour in Russia the officials and the public were united in the opinion that Prokofiev is nearer to the spirit of our time than any other living composer. The government critics wanted to see in him a proletarian composer, whose music is by and for the masses. Prokofiev's residence in France is a disagreeable fact to circumvent, but outside of that he fits into the scheme of the Soviet idea: vigorous rhythms, straightforward melody, a peculiar efficiency of delivery, complete lack of all vagueness and day dreaming—these features ought to make for a proletarian musician. That Prokofiev is not such is a matter of regrettable maladjustment, and the theory is not to be blamed for that.

Beethoven, when he was writing a Coda, rent the skies with his endless tonic chords, in all registers, in all conceivable combinations of thirds, fifths and unisons. Prokofiev's conclusions (always on the tonic) are brisk, energetic and abrupt. Usually one tonic chord suffices. (March from the *Love of Three Oranges*, *Overture on Hebrew Themes*.) Somehow these brusque endings are more understandable to people at large than Beethoven's successive farewells. If so, then modern music has acquired a meaning.

PROKOFIEV RECORDS

Overture on Hebrew Themes, Op. 34. Two sides. Victor Salon Orchestra of Argentina. One 10-inch disc (V-47167). 75c.

Classical Symphony in D Major, Op. 25. Three sides and *Love for Three Oranges*: Scherzo and March. One side. Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Serge Koussevitzky. Two 12-inch discs (V-7196 and V-7197). \$2 each.

Love for Three Oranges: Waltz Scherzo; March and Scherzo. Two sides. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. One 12-inch disc (V-9128). \$1.50.

Love for Three Oranges: March. One side and *Interludium in modo antico*. (Glazounow) One side. Brussels Royal Conservatory Orchestra conducted by Désiré Defauw. One 12-inch disc (C-67812D). \$1.50.

Suggestion Diabolique. One side and *Fairy Tale in E Minor*. (Medtner) One side. Benno Moisevitch (Piano). One 10-inch disc (V-1449). \$1.50.

Prelude in C Major, Op. 12. One side and *La Passion*. (Lamare) One side. Michael Zadora (Piano). One 10-inch disc (PD-23022). \$1.25.

Prelude. One side and (a) *Moment Musical*. (Schubert-Renié); (b) *La Commere* (Couperin-Renié). One side. Henriette Renié (Harp). One 10-inch disc (O-166.232). \$1.25.



The Matter of Duplications

By RICHARD J. MAGRUDER

Duplications have always been received somewhat biliously by the vast majority of record collectors. Unless a new recording of a work already available in several versions revealed immeasurable mechanical and artistic superiorities to those versions, and so had a clear and unarguable *raison d'être*, loud, raucous and emphatic disapproval was heard on all sides. Blood pressure increased alarmingly; sputtering indignation, scarcely conducive to the proper appreciation and enjoyment of good music, got the better of many an otherwise sane collector; and the general clamor equalled in volume the clamor of an army of Tom Heflins discussing the consequences if the Pope should sneak into the White House.

The manufacturers, we were told incessantly, with much earnest gnashing of the teeth and rolling of the eyes, were not only being scandalously extravagant in thus giving us a little choice in selecting a recording of a work. Worse, they were not heeding the sacred, singularly pure and infallibly judicious wishes of the collector. Why record the *Eroica* again when Thaddeus Garfinkle's revolutionary sonata has yet to be recorded? Clearly, precious time and energy that could more rewardingly be devoted to recording Dr. Garfinkle's valuable sonata were being thrown recklessly away in order to duplicate works already recorded several times.

Very sad and affecting were these protests; or else, and perhaps more frequently, very loud and bellicose; in either case, though, not altogether convincing. Somehow, it was impossible to escape the heretical conviction that they were based on an extremely flimsy and shaky foundation.

Why, indeed, shouldn't there be duplications of every sound piece of music? Why, for that matter, shouldn't there be a vast number of duplications? So long as the manufacturers and dealers don't object, it is difficult to understand why collectors should. For the manufacturers and dealers, after all, are the only ones who can reasonably and with feasible grounds object to the number of duplications. Their livings depend upon the sales of records. And if they make money (and one supposes, and hopes, that they do, or otherwise it would be hard to account for the rapidly increasing number of duplications issued by the manufacturers, who sometimes even duplicate records already listed in their own catalogues, as, for example, Victor's *Pathétique* Symphony and *Kreutzer* Sonata and Columbia's *Unfinished* Symphony)—if they can make money by duplicating recordings of some musical compositions, it seems ridiculous for collectors to cavil. With such an astonishing variety and quantity of music now available on discs, to protest because some compositions are being re-recorded—often with noticeable improvements—seems absurd, pointless, trivial, irrelevant.

There is, moreover, plenty of evidence pointing to the practice being of immense value to the record collector, especially to the record collector doomed to live in some inaccessible and remote part of the world where music, being held in disrepute and suspicion, is seldom if ever performed. Whether he likes it or not, however, it is abundantly plain that he will shortly have to take steps toward getting himself in a frame of mind whereby it will be possible for him to contemplate the phe-

nomenon of duplication quietly, calmly and serenely, without the customary rise of gorge and belligerency that has been his method in the past. From viewing them quietly, he will perhaps proceed to viewing them curiously; and then maybe curiosity will give way to covetousness—and thus a singularly delicate piece of indirect salesmanship will have been felicitously achieved.

If there is anything certain in the record industry, nothing is more certain than that in the next year or so we are going to be deluged with more, bigger and better duplications than ever before. Good recordings of works, familiar and unfamiliar, first-, second-, and third-rate, are going to appear; and they will appear again, under different labels, interpreted, maybe better, maybe not so well, by different artists; and it is not entirely inconceivable, if the activities of the past couple of years may be regarded as symptomatic, that a little later they will appear still again. And perhaps yet again. One shudders to think of the resounding, heart-breaking howls that will—for a while at any rate—assail the inscrutable and somehow not very sympathetic heavens.

II

As was hinted above, the business of duplicating recorded works, from the collector's viewpoint, is an excellent idea, sound in theory, effective in practice, vitally essential if the phonograph is to assume a position of any genuine importance in the musical life of the future. The abuse that the collectors have been heaping so lavishly upon the companies should be heaped more properly upon themselves. If the practice has brought loss to some, it has assuredly brought gain to others, and it isn't hard to figure out who are the gainers, who the losers. Ironically, only the gainers have thus far been heard in protest.

One of the principal objections many people find with recorded music is the inescapable fact that a record is always the same, that it never changes, that a musical performance, once recorded, will always be the same in interpretation at each hearing. This, in the main, is lamentably true. It is also happily true that records are seldom *exactly* the same, or perhaps a better way of putting it would be to say that we seldom listen to a record in *exactly* the same mood. In either case the results are precisely the same: records commonly sound differently at different hearings. Whether the reason for this lies in the machine, the record or the individual, it would be difficult to say; but surely every experienced record collector must be thoroughly acquainted with the fact that sometimes a record sounds a good deal better today than it did last week, or perhaps it sounds a good deal worse. Were this not true, listening to records—especially if one has a small collection—would soon become unendurable.

That, however, is a minor matter; it doesn't alter the fact that a piece of music, once put on records, will always be interpreted the same. The reproduction may be better at times or it may be worse, improving or impairing the tonal qualities of the sound that issues from the loudspeaker or tone chamber, but never in any case affecting the interpretation: that remains fixed and immutable.

In protesting against the conclusions set forth in Mr. Winthrop Parkhurst's article, "Exit the Interpreter," published in the March issue of *Disques*, several correspondents advanced this reason in an attempt to prove Mr. Parkhurst wrong,

declaring that mechanical music lacked sufficient variety to warrant its being substituted for the flesh-and-blood performer. For the present this argument is a sound one, but it describes a condition which is by no means incapable of amelioration. As a partial—perhaps in the future even as a complete—remedy for this duplications may be offered. If we have available, say, a dozen of the finest interpretations of Brahms' Fourth Symphony, surely no one can reasonably contend that wider and better variety could be found even in actual performances.

The rejoinder to this, of course, is obvious and inevitable; it is that only those blessed with exceedingly well-lined purses could possibly hope to own all or even several of these various interpretations. Only the extremely well-to-do can afford nowadays to own even one interpretation of every musical work they want in their libraries; nor can many afford the rare luxury of purchasing more than one version of a well-liked composition.

The problem thus presents formidable difficulties, and there appears, at the moment, only one workable solution: much cheaper records, or, rather, records as good as and better than the best issued nowadays at much lower prices. Whether this actually would solve the problem satisfactorily, of course, is a matter for considerable speculation and calculation. It would solve the matter for the collector very prettily—but how about the manufacturer? Can he afford to issue records of good quality at much lower prices than he is now getting, and without lowering the quality of the records?

If any such plan is attempted, one thing is certain. That is this: the problem will have to be attacked in a much more intelligent, resolute, realistic and profound manner than the book publishers did when they attempted, a year or so ago, to put \$1 books on the market. Everyone remembers the dismal ending to that laudable enterprise, which began so bravely.

III

The problem of duplications promises to grow more acute every day, with every issue of a good piece of music previously recorded. It is no use arguing that there is still plenty of good music yet to be recorded; no one will dispute you if you do. It is surely no profound secret that there is, in fact, a great deal of worthy music not so far on discs. Much of this music, however, has only a limited appeal, and records of such music, though they constitute the glories of the various catalogues, are scarcely of much monetary value to the manufacturers. In order to issue such records, a certain number of best-sellers must be issued also, and most of these best-sellers have already been recorded. Duplication is therefore inevitable.

Nor can it be denied that some duplications are of no value whatever and seem grossly extravagant and pointless. It is hard, to cite but one of many examples, to excuse the manufacturers for continuing to duplicate parts of the *Ring* when so much of that work has yet to be recorded. And when there are already available several good versions of a work, for a manufacturer to put out another one, less meritorious and just as expensive, is plainly a sad waste of time. This happens, moreover, fairly frequently. Duplications of trashy and inferior music, too, are wasteful, valueless and profoundly irritating. But after all no one is compelled to buy these duplications; now that such a quantity of music has been put on

records, they can be completely ignored. The old complaint of collectors to the effect that they have a pocket full of money to spend on records but can find nothing desirable to buy no longer holds good—not, at any rate, unless their opulence is sufficient to make even a bank president's eyes pop. And in the main most duplications serve an immensely useful purpose—perhaps by making available a good piece of music at a lower and more reasonable price, perhaps by representing a definite improvement on available versions, perhaps by offering a new and entirely different interpretation of a work, perhaps by stirring up interest in a neglected composition and thus arousing interest in all recorded versions of the work. No one person is capable of saying everything worth saying about Shakespeare. Neither is any one interpreter capable of saying everything worth saying about Brahms.

Duplications, then, are extremely valuable artistically, if not so valuable commercially. This being so, it seems odd that those who should logically be interested only in the artistic merit of recordings, *i. e.*, collectors, should be the ones who fill the air with furious protests, while those most interested in the commercial merit of recordings, *i. e.*, manufacturers, have thus far maintained a chilly silence. All of which, if nothing else, at least enables this article to be closed decorously with the homely platitude showing that it's a strange, inexplicable world.

(Continued from page 149)

NICOLAS SLONIMSKY, who contributes an article on Sergei Prokofiev to this issue, is a composer, pianist, conductor and theorist. He was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, and studied at the Conservatory of that city. Leaving Russia in 1918, he traveled extensively through Turkey, Bulgaria, Servia, Italy and Germany, giving occasional piano recitals. In 1923 he came to America at the invitation of the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, N. Y. Since 1925 Mr. Slonimsky has lived in Boston, where he is conductor of the Boston Chamber Orchestra. In addition to his activities as a conductor, pianist and composer, Mr. Slonimsky lectures at the Boston Public Library and contributes articles on musical subjects to the *Boston Evening Transcript*, *Modern Music*, the *American Mercury*, the *Phonograph Monthly Review* and other periodicals.



"The Beethoven String Quartets," by Joseph Cottler, will be the subject for the feature article of the July issue of *Disques*. The article will be published in two parts, half in the July issue, half in the August.



A great many inquiries as to whether prints of the etching by Edward C. Smith of Serge Koussevitzky, a reproduction of which served as the frontispiece to the May issue of *Disques*, are obtainable. A limited number of signed prints is available through the publishers of this magazine at \$5 each.

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I would a thousand times rather listen to this work than to any of the Beethoven symphonies, if only for the reason that I am sick of development of thematic material for its own sake: Elgar's music cannot move forward without developing itself, the whole symphony being one huge polyphonic evolution without any specific places where he says: "Now for the development section." The avoidance of this artificiality disproves the common assertion that Elgar derives from Brahms who very directly derived from Beethoven. Elgar certainly derives from Beethoven—as what symphonist does not?—but Wagner is the link and not Brahms. Wagner, applying the Beethoven principles of thematic development to his music dramas, broke down the idea of a definite place to roll up one's sleeves and develop: Elgar has applied the Wagner synthesis back to the symphony, thus showing a fundamental difference from Brahms, who certainly did believe in the time and the mood and the place for development.

It is the indefatigable unfolding of themes that from the start are drowned in symphonic thinking, the unflagging intensity of the themes themselves, and the unrelenting persistence of the heavy orchestral polyphony that hold Elgar aloof from superficial minds, but it is just these things that make him an undying joy to those who can penetrate the surface of things and who place the spiritual above the material. Nothing describes Elgar's symphonic music so well as the opening stanza of Francis Thompson's *The Hound of Heaven* with its "unhurrying chase, and unperturbed pace, deliberate speed, majestic instancy." In fact, Elgar's work may be said to be the musical counterpart of Thompson's verse: it is the eternal war between the Ideal and the Real with the Ideal triumphant every time, and it is probably because of this that the so-called New Paganism has given this mystic the cold shoulder. The Latin Quarter of this funny world has overlooked the modernity of a technique which makes Prokofiev's *Oranges* taste stale and makes vapid emptiness of such things as come from Paris, not excluding Strawinsky's latest efforts.

This, the first of Elgar's two symphonies, was first performed by Richter at Manchester, England, in 1908 and in the course of the following year achieved over a hundred performances. It is in four movements, but the break between them is little more than a breathing space, all being bound together by recurring thematic material. The work opens with a *Nobilmente* melody which serves as Introduction, but also pervades the whole Symphony, for it recurs many times in various guises and forms a magnificent and uplifting Coda to the Finale. Being anxious to bring this melody into the consciousness of his hearers, Elgar has over-emphasized it at the outset, thus making the Introduction too long.



The recording is superb, showing the London Symphony Orchestra at its best in a reading which must be authoritative because the veteran composer himself is helmsman. It would be a crime to play, after the Symphony, the foolish little *May Song* that is the make-weight of this set: play it first and then forever forget this saccharine by-product of the coal that burns with such overpowering intensity in the Symphony.

LAURENCE POWELL

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V-9920		Four 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-101. \$6.50.

Miniature Score: Philharmonia No. 267.

This makes the third recording of Strauss' music to Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. Strauss himself, leading the Berlin State Opera Orchestra, recently recorded it for Polydor, and the set was promptly repressed and issued locally by Brunswick. Several months before Strauss' version appeared, Columbia published a set played by the Straram Orchestra conducted by Walter Straram. While there is nothing really objectionable about so many duplications, it would probably have been a great deal pleasanter, and might have added more variety to the lists, if there had been a slightly wider interval of time between the release dates. But it is a common occurrence for a piece of music, after having reposed quietly on the shelf for a number of years, suddenly to blossom out gloriously under the labels of all the manufacturers, and at the same time. Well, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* can now be said to have received somewhat more than handsome treatment from the manufacturers, and luckily the music is sufficiently attractive to justify such lavish attention. (Let those to whom a duplication is as a piece of red flannel is to a bull recall the pleasant fact that it has been at least four years since we have been ravished with an 1812.)

The Straram set was considered in this place in the December *Disques*, Strauss' in the April issue. As was noted in the latter review, there is a wide difference between the two, Straram making the music as vivacious and sparkling as possible, Strauss taking things at a more comfortable pace. Clemens Krauss' interpretation seems to strike a happy balance between the two. Strauss' tunes lend themselves particularly well to vivacious treatment, and Krauss seems to appreciate this fact without overdoing it. Moreover, he has an excellent band at his disposal—the generally reliable Vienna Philharmonic—and two capable soloists, Otto Schulhof, a pianist, and F. Malrecker, a violinist. Finally, the recording is beautifully done, being neither so brilliant as that in Straram's version nor so coarse as that in Strauss'. But all three versions have a generous supply of merits, so that there is plenty of room for difference of opinion. We incline toward the Krauss, but shall not be unduly shocked if you prefer either of the other two. After all, Strauss' remains the authoritative version—an important consideration for those who are impressed by so formidable a word as "authoritative."

DVORÁK

B-90150

to

B-90154

SYMPHONY NO. 5 in *E Minor*, Op. 95. Ten sides. Berlin
State Opera Orchestra conducted by Erich Kleiber.
Five 12-inch discs in album. Brunswick Set No. 30. \$7.50.



Miniature Score: Eulenberg No. 433.

An ancient and widely esteemed remedy for harassed concert-goers, seeking relief from the horrors of hearing all the old standbys several times a season, is to write an indignant letter to the newspapers, belligerently demanding that the offending conductor be forthwith deported to Russia that his clients may be spared hearing Dvorák's *New World*, Schubert's *Unfinished* or Beethoven's Fifth for the hundredth time. The more bellicose the letter, the more effective the relief to the writer, though the conductor ordinarily continues sublimely oblivious to all such petulant upheavals in the public prints. The *New World*, perhaps as much as any work, has come in for particularly savage abuse because of its too frequent inclusion on concert programs. The strange thing is that, despite its numerous performances in concert halls, it has not thus far been over-recorded. This is all the more puzzling in view of the fact that it is one of those works that adapt themselves extremely well to the exigencies of recording. Even acoustical records of the *New World* were interesting and easily recognizable above the raucous rasp of the needle; and good electrical recording makes the symphony issue from the loudspeaker almost as delightfully as it does from the concert stage.

Those who object to the smooth polish and studied grace that mark Stokowski's version have in the past commonly turned to Sir Hamilton Harty's heart-warming reading for comfort. This version by Kleiber should offer formidable rivalry to both of these sets, for it is in all respects an admirable one, carefully planned, beautifully played and superbly recorded. To include any remarks here about the music, its history and the conditions under which it was written would be superfluous, for the quantity of such information has long since reached staggering proportions, and it is easily accessible to anyone sufficiently anxious to have it—if, indeed, there is anyone who isn't yet thoroughly familiar with the literature pertaining to the work. Whether Dvorák was celebrating the American Indian or Negro or his native Bohemia or all three is of scant importance now; listening to the music, if it hasn't by this time become objectionably familiar, is enough.

Kleiber's interpretation, charged with energy and vigor, is quite in accord with the spirit of the work and Dvorák's intentions, insofar as we can determine them. There is no polishing of phrases, no mawkish lingering over pretty tunes, no painstaking smoothing down of sharp corners. He heaves great masses of sound at us, and it is done with such gusto that one soon falls under the spell of this sort of treatment. What he gives us, in short, is an honest, healthy interpretation of the work, brimming over with robust spirits and far removed from the sophistication of the Stokowski reading. Some thrilling moments are contributed by the brass and kettledrums, and the recorders have seen to it that the latter don't wreak their customary havoc in those places where they have a dominating part. The strings and woodwinds are similarly excellent, and the whole band holds together remarkably well. Dvorák's fresh, appealing tunes, his vivid orchestration, his exhilarating



rhythms—these receive affectionate and skilful attention here, and the recorders have performed their duties with more than ordinary success. The set, indeed, is one of Kleiber's salient phonographic achievements.

CHABRIER
V-36037

MARCHE JOYEUSE. One side and
LE ROI MALGRÉ LUI: *Danse Slave*. One side. Victor Symphony Orchestra conducted by Rosario Bourdon.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

10 The Victor Symphony Orchestra generally sticks to the established favorites when recording, but now and then, as here, it strikes out valiantly for itself, offering something not too frequently encountered elsewhere. Departing from the beaten paths, the band this month tackles two Chabrier numbers, one of which, the *Danse Slave* from *Le Roi Malgré lui*, is evidently a first recording. The *Marche joyeuse*, in a sparkling and energetic version by Albert Wolff and the Lamoureux Orchestra, was issued last August by Brunswick. Although not so full and well-rounded as the Lamoureux band's version, Bourdon and the Victor Symphony give it a similarly vigorous interpretation, bringing out excellently its exuberance and vivacity. The recording is thoroughly well done. The label ascribes the piece to Chabrier-Hinrichs. The latter's share in the proceedings isn't quite clear, since Chabrier himself is said to have orchestrated the work. . . . The *Danse Slave* makes a worthwhile addition to the recorded excerpts from *Le Roi Malgré lui*, and Bourdon and his men present it competently. The disc may be put at the top of the Victor Symphony's recording achievements.

GERMAN
V-D1939
and
V-D1940

IMPORTED

WELSH RHAPSODY. Four sides. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Landon Ronald. Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Edward German is known to American record collectors principally by his charming *Nell Gwynn* dances. Born in 1862 at Whitchurch, Shropshire, England, German early developed an uncommon talent for writing graceful and genuinely good light music—somewhat on the order of Sir Arthur Sullivan. When Sullivan died, indeed, many thought that German might fill his place acceptably. He composed much incidental music for the theatre that was far superior to the general level of such music, and several of his light operas, one of which, *Fallen Fairies*, had a libretto by W. S. Gilbert, were enormously popular. Besides his light operas and music for the theatre, German has written much orchestral music, including two symphonies, and many songs, piano pieces, and chamber music. The *Welsh Rhapsody*, setting forth four folk tunes skilfully worked into the orchestral texture, was written in 1904. It is pleasant music, lacking somewhat in depth and warmth, but if it isn't very profound, neither is it trivial, and German's effective orchestration is worth noting. Easy to listen to, the work constitutes admirable—and unhackneyed—recording material. Sir Landon Ronald gives it a rousing performance, and the recorders have put it on the records very deftly.


TSCHAIKOWSKY

V-D1929

and

V-D1930

IMPORTED



FRANCESCA DA RIMINI: *Symphonic Fantasia*. Four sides.
London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates.
Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 840.

BORODIN

V-EJ609

and

V-EJ610

IMPORTED

PRINCE IGOR: *March and Dances Nos. 8 and 17*. Four sides.
Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Leo Blech.
Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Miniature Score: Philharmonia No. 171.

Tschaikowsky has surely not been neglected by the recording companies, but some of his lesser known pieces have, and so this admirable recording of *Francesca da Rimini*, apparently the first electrical version to be issued, was well worth doing. The possibilities of the symphonies, the *Nutcracker* and *Romeo and Juliet*, the works by which Tschaikowsky is chiefly known, have been about exhausted so far as the phonograph is concerned; all of them have been excellently recorded, and all are available in several versions. It is thus highly probable that the near future will yield some of the unfamiliar pieces, many of which contain genuinely fine music. *Francesca da Rimini* is an example. The third of his orchestral fantasias, it was originally intended as an opera, but it took its present form because of a disagreement between Tschaikowsky and the librettist, who insisted that Wagnerian methods be utilized in the score. Tschaikowsky, objecting to this attempt to curb his freedom, abandoned the project altogether, but the subject still attracted him, and so he resolved to make a purely orchestral piece of it. "I have only just finished the composition of a new work, the symphonic fantasia, *Francesca da Rimini*," he wrote in October, 1876, to his brother, Modeste. "I have worked at it *con amore*, and believe my love has been successful." The work was dedicated to S. I. Taniev.

A quotation from Canto V of Dante's *Inferno* is prefaced to the score. The music begins and ends with the terrifying spectacle that confronted Dante and Virgil as they entered the region of the Second Circle of Hell, where the souls of carnal sinners were suitably punished, with sound effect accompaniment consisting of a howling wind and moans and shrieks from the luckless damned. Among these sinners, of course, was Francesca da Rimini, whose melancholy tale Tschaikowsky's music sets forth so effectively. The horrors of the Second Circle and the details of Francesca's story are vividly evoked, and Tschaikowsky's treatment of the orchestra is unfailingly ingenious and cunning. There are the usual sound and fury commonly associated with this composer, but it is all very cleverly and skilfully arranged, so much so, in fact, that the work belongs among the most successful of Tschaikowsky's orchestral pieces.

Coates' interpretation is as fine as anything we have had from this conductor. *Francesca da Rimini* is, of course, preëminently Coates music. He avoids the temptation to obtain spurious effects by excessive exaggeration, a fault to which



Mengelberg frequently succumbs in his Tschaikowsky readings, and he likewise successfully eschews any over-sentimentalizing of the music. The London Symphony responds vigorously, and the recording calls for nothing but praise.

The *Prince Igor* dances are familiar enough, but not in such a brilliant and fiery interpretation as that they here receive from Dr. Blech and the Berlin State Opera Orchestra. The recording, moreover, is thoroughly fine, so that Borodin's savage music leaps from the phonograph with all its barbaric splendor unimpaired by flabby reproduction and noisy surfaces. The March is done with considerable spirit and vigor, too.

**FRANCK
D'INDY**

PD-67002

and

PD-67003

IMPORTED

THE WILD HUNTSMAN: *Symphonic Poem.* (Franck)
Three sides and

FERVAAL: *Introduction to Act I.* (d'Indy) One side. Lamoureux Orchestra conducted by Albert Wolff.

Two 12-inch discs. \$1.50 each.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 514.

FRANCK

PD-67005

IMPORTED

REDEMPTION: *Symphonic Poem.* Two sides. Lamoureux Orchestra conducted by Albert Wolff. One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

In his symphonic poem, the *Wild Huntsman*, composed in 1883, César Franck attempts to tell the tale of a wicked Count who, defying the local blue laws, went hunting when he should properly have been in church. The legend of the wild huntsman is a familiar one and exists in numerous versions, but Franck's work is based on Bürger's ballad, *Der wilde Jäger*. The music depicts a peaceful landscape on Sunday morning, the citizens trudging piously to church, the excitement of the evil Count's hunt. His nefarious pastimes are suddenly interrupted by a "dismal, implacable voice," which, cursing him, cries: "Sacrilegious man! Be forever hunted by Hell!" Franck treats the story simply and obviously, and its various events can be followed quite easily: one hears hunting horns, church bells, a great turmoil in the orchestra and thunderous rolls on the timpani. Far removed from the exalted mysticism that prevails in the Symphony in D Minor, the *Psyché* Suite, the Violin Sonata and the Piano Quintet, the *Wild Huntsman* reveals Franck in a lighter, less exalted, entirely different and, incidentally, far less interesting mood. Some composers can be what is called light—i.e., Beethoven in his Eighth Symphony—without in any sense descending to triviality, without, in fine, suffering any evil consequences. The Eighth, placed beside the Fifth, doesn't suffer by comparison. Opinion may differ as to which is the greater work, but there is nothing incongruous in their being placed together. Disastrous results follow, however, if we try to put the *Wild Huntsman* beside the Symphony in D, just as disastrous results would follow if we tried to put *A Night on the Bald Mountain* beside *Boris Godounow*. Separated from his gentle ecstasies and mysticism, Franck becomes comparatively dull. . . . Listening to this fine recording and equally fine interpretation by Wolff and his Lamoureux Orchestra, though, is by no means dull; it is, on the contrary, highly enjoyable, and the music becomes mildly effective; if the fate of the wild huntsman fails to move or thrill or rejoice us, the unlucky sinner, badgered and oppressed by primitive blue laws, at least engages our interest, maybe, too, our sympathy—but

Franck never intended him to do that.

Entitled by Franck a "poem-symphony," *Redemption* is a setting of a poem by Edouard Blau. The choruses, it is said, are rather inferior, the finest music occurring in the long orchestral interlude given here. The work was written in 1871, but Franck apparently was not entirely satisfied with it—neither was the public—and it was completely revised and rewritten after it was published. The music of the orchestral interlude gives us more of the composer of the Symphony in D Minor than does the *Wild Huntsman*. Wolff presents it in such a manner as to make us anxious to hear what he would do with the symphony. Perhaps, when Polydor gets around to that work, Wolff will be chosen to direct the recording. The reproduction here is as fine as any we have had from Polydor, as fine, one is almost tempted to say, as any we have had from any company.

When, after neglecting a composer completely, the recording companies finally do get around to issuing records of his works, they all seem to hit upon the same composition to be recorded. Vincent d'Indy is the latest to profit—or suffer—by this inexplicable but time-honored custom. Until the recording by the Brussels Royal Conservatory Orchestra of the Introduction to his opera, *Fervaal* (reviewed in the March issue of *Disques*), appeared, nothing of d'Indy's had been recorded. Now the Lamoureux band, performing under the auspices of Polydor, gives us the very same piece. It is beautifully played and superlatively recorded, and serves to make us anxious to get further samples of d'Indy's music on records.

WAGNER
PD-95408
IMPORTED

{ **LOHENGRIN: Prelude.** Two sides. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

Miniature Score: Philharmonia No. 39.

Ordinarily, a new recording of the *Lohengrin* Prelude would not constitute news of a very thrilling and novel nature, but Furtwängler, the Berlin Philharmonic and the recorders have here combined to produce a version of such high excellence that the record cannot be summarily dismissed as just another duplication. Here the Prelude issues from the loudspeaker more nobly, plausibly and accurately than any other version we recall hearing. The strings are ravishingly beautiful, and on the second side the splendid outburst of the brass is accomplished with superb dramatic effect. Familiar as the work is to most of us, Furtwängler, as is the pleasant way with most great conductors, makes it seem almost like new music. The Berlin Philharmonic, whose foreign tours unfailingly elicit high encomiums (the reason why is abundantly indicated by this record), plays beautifully, and its efforts have been transferred to the record with astonishingly small loss. In short, a superlatively fine disc.

RABAUD
O-166.280
IMPORTED

{ **EGLOGUE: Poème Virgilien.** Two sides. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Henri Rabaud. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

Henri Rabaud's recording of his *Divertissement on Russian Themes* was reviewed on page 514 of the February issue. The *Eglogue* given here is quiet, subdued music; it isn't very impressive. Neither is the recording.

**DEBUSSY**

B-90158

and

B-90159

NOCTURNES: (a) *Nuages*; (b) *Fêtes*. Four sides. Lamoureux Orchestra conducted by Albert Wolff.
Two 12-inch discs. \$1.50 each.

Miniature Score: Jean Jobert Co.

Periodic attempts have been made by the manufacturers to give us an effective and convincing set of Debussy's *Nocturnes*, and out of these attempts have emerged some salient examples of the recorders' art. Among the latest and perhaps the most successful of these attempts is this set of *Nuages* and *Fêtes*, played by the Lamoureux Orchestra and Albert Wolff, a group of artists whose phonograph reputation mounts steadily and impressively. Either Wolff understands the phonograph uncommonly well, or the engineers supervising the Lamoureux band's recording activities are competent beyond the ordinary. But whatever the reason, it is abundantly plain that these records are among the most realistic and exciting now being issued, and they are constantly being improved. There was a time, not so long ago, when Coates and Stokowski dominated the recording field, their orchestral discs surpassing, technically and in many ways musically, all but a few of the general run of releases.

In this set of *Nuages* and *Fêtes* Wolff and the recorders have succeeded magnificently in getting Debussy's nebulous music on the discs plausibly. It is a pity that the set doesn't include the third of the three numbers that comprise the *Nocturnes*: *Sirènes*, which calls for a wordless choir of sixteen women's voices in addition to the orchestra. However, Gabriel Pierné and the Colonne Orchestra have made an adequate record of this piece, and it fills the gap very acceptably for the present.

It is hard to describe any music, but these *Nocturnes* of Debussy's present difficulties peculiarly their own. Debussy himself is quoted as having said: "The title *Nocturnes* is to be understood in a wider sense than that usually given it, and should be regarded as conveying a decorative meaning. The form of the nocturne has not entered into consideration, and the term should be viewed as signifying all that is associated with diversified impressions and special lights." This is about as evasive and vague as the music itself. Expanding upon these words, the commentators have labored mightily, but usually the result is no more revealing than Debussy's own words. The frequently quoted Lawrence Gilman, however, has succeeded better than most, his words coming closer to disclosing to us the significance of the music than any others with which we are familiar. "These are not tone pictures of clouds, of festivals, of the ocean's alluring choristers," he has written in the Philadelphia Orchestra program books; "they represent an effort to evoke, by indirectness of suggestion, the spiritual counterpart of these things—their reflection in the super-sensuous consciousness. Debussy gives you, in brief, the image alembicated, distilled to the last degree. For him the visible world does not exist as it does for most men and most poets—it is only upon the borderland of this spirit that he finds what others know as the reality of imaginative experience. He is master of the hidden beauty and the unspoken word."

The melancholy beauty of *Nuages* and the blazing color of *Fêtes* have been gotten

on to these records with extraordinary skill, and the clarity, depth and accuracy of the reproduction are noteworthy.



**BRAHMS
BERLIOZ**

B-90155
and
B-90156

ACADEMIC FESTIVAL *Overture*. (Brahms) Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Julius Prüwer. Three sides and
THE DAMNATION OF FAUST: *Rákóczy March*. (Berlioz)
One side. Lamoureux Orchestra conducted by Albert Wolff.
Two 12-inch discs. \$1.50 each.

Miniature Scores: Eulenburg Nos. 656 and 801.

BERLIOZ

B-90157

THE DAMNATION OF FAUST: (a) *Minuet of the Will-o'-the-Wisp*; (b) *Dance of the Sylphs*. Two sides. Lamoureux Orchestra conducted by Albert Wolff. One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 801.

Prüwer's interpretation of the *Academic Festival Overture*, recorded by Polydor and now repressed and issued by Brunswick, is a good, crisp one, well, if now and then somewhat coarsely, recorded and vigorously played, but lacking in any particularly distinguishing qualities. This is the third version of the work to appear in the last year, Columbia having released on its export list a record by Dr. Fritz Stiedry and, more recently, a set by Mengelberg and the Concertgebouw Orchestra. Of the three, Mengelberg's is the best recorded, and there is a firmness and solidity in his reading somewhat lacking in the others. Prüwer's version, then, can be recommended, but it is suggested that you listen to the others before buying it. There are differences of interpretation in the three sets that make personal opinion an important element in choosing the most satisfactory version.

Wolff and the Lamoureux band stand out prominently on the Brunswick list this month, and in addition to the excerpts from Berlioz' *Damnation of Faust* listed above, they play *Nuages* and *Fêtes* from Debussy's *Nocturnes*, reviewed elsewhere in this issue. The familiar March is done with fine gusto, and the other numbers are vividly played and recorded.

KÉLER BÉLA

V-V69

LUSTSPIEL OVERTURE. Two sides. Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Clemens Schmalstich.
One 10-inch disc. 75c.

The extremely reasonable price, the deft, animated playing by the Berlin State Opera Orchestra, and the clean, vivid recording make this an altogether pleasurable little disc. Kéler Béla's joyous tunes are genuinely attractive.

**SATIE
QUINET**

C-50292D

TROIS PETITES PIECES MONTÉES. (Satie) Symphony Orchestra conducted by Pierre Chagnon. One side and
CHARADE. (Quinet) One side. Court of Belgium Trio.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

The Satie number was reviewed on page 448 of the January, 1931, issue, the Quinet piece on page 364 of the November, 1930, issue.



CONCERTO

FALLA

C-67919D

to

C-67921D

NIGHTS IN THE GARDENS OF SPAIN. Six sides. Manuel Navarro (Piano) and Orquesta Bética de Sevilla conducted by Ernesto Halffter.

Three 12-inch discs in album. Columbia Set No. 156. \$4.50.

C-67922D

and

C-67923D

CONCERTO for Harpsichord, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Violin and Violoncello. Four sides. Manuel de Falla (Harpsichord), Marcel Moyse (Flute), M. Donnbeau (Oboe), M. Godeau (Clarinet), M. Darrieux (Violin) and M. Cruque ('Cello).

Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Both of these sets, now repressed by the local Columbia Company, were reviewed in the article, "Manuel de Falla," published in the May issue of *Disques*.



PIANO

MENDELSSOHN JENSEN

V-1508

SPRING SONG (*Song Without Words*, No. 30), Op. 62, No. 6. (Mendelssohn) One side and

MURMURING ZEPHYRS. (Adolf Jensen-R. Niemann) One side. Rudolph Ganz (Piano). One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

The most impressive feature of this second Rudolph Ganz disc—his first was issued last October and contained a Chopin piece and Liszt's *Liebestraum*—is the recording. The *Spring Song* is taken in a very matter-of-fact way, but at least the pianist doesn't linger over it. . . . Adolf Jensen was born in 1837 and died in 1879. He was a German. His works consist mostly of songs and piano pieces. *Murmuring Zephyrs* is an inconsequential number, light and airy, as would be expected. It is well-played.

IBERT MACDOWELL GLAZOUNOW

B-6103

LE PETIT ÂNE BLANC. (Ibert) CZARDAS. (MacDowell) One side and

GAVOTTE in D. (Glazounow) One side. Ignace Hilsberg (Piano). One 10-inch disc. 75c.

This is an excellent little disc, giving three pleasant pieces by Jacques Ibert, MacDowell and Glazounow. The delightful *Le petit âne blanc*, taken from Ibert's set of piano pieces, *Histoires*, and the MacDowell number, which is the last of the four piano pieces that comprise Op. 24, are grouped on one side of the disc, the Glazounow on the other. Hilsberg plays them competently, and the recording is very good. The price, moreover, will enchant those seeking bargains.

CHOPIN

C-LX99

to

C-LX102

IMPORTED

MAZURKAS: *Op. 7, Nos. 1, 2, 3; Op. 24, No. 4; Op. 33, Nos. 2, 4; Op. 41, No. 1; Op. 50, No. 2; Op. 63, No. 2; Op. 67, Nos. 3, 4; Op. 68, No. 2.* Eight sides. Ignaz Friedman (Piano). Four 12-inch discs in album. \$8.



Twelve of the fifty some Mazurkas Chopin wrote are included in this album. We have several album collections of the Preludes, the Nocturnes, the Etudes, and the Ballades, but until now the Mazurkas have been used mainly to fill out odd sides of records or sets. (There have, of course, been occasional single record releases of one or another of the Mazurkas.) Forty-one Mazurkas were published during Chopin's lifetime, but various others were issued after his death. *Op. 67* and *Op. 68*, for example, of which two numbers from the former and one from the latter are given here, were published by Fontana after the composer's death. These, together with the published examples and several other scattered numbers, make a grand total of fifty-six.

Peculiarly Slavonic, the Mazurka is a Polish national dance of long standing; traces of it, indeed, can be found as far back as the sixteenth century. The Mazurka, full of life and energy and in three-four or three-eight time, offers abundant freedom of form and treatment; repeats are made and daring and exhilarating steps are improvised. Chopin was early attracted by the Mazurka, and in his hands they became beautifully subtle and effective compositions. Deftly turned phrases, sudden snatches of melody, skilful rhythms—these are some of the things that distinguish and set apart the Chopin Mazurkas. Like the Strauss waltzes, they are full of sharp contrasts and quickly shifting moods—ranging from the gay and abandoned to the thoughtful and melancholy—so that there is no danger of monotony.

No. 1 from *Op. 7*, in B Flat Major, is gay and assured, with a graceful lilt; No. 2, in A Minor, is pensive; No. 3, from the same group, in F Minor, is more vigorous and energetic. Of No. 4 of *Op. 24*, Huneker, in his book on Chopin, enthusiastically wrote: "Ah! here is a gem, a beautiful and exquisitely colored poem. In B Flat Minor, it sends out prehensile filaments that entwine and draw us into the centre of a wondrous melody, laden with rich odors, odors that almost intoxicate." *Op. 33* consists of warhorses; both of the numbers rendered here, No. 2 in D Major and No. 4 in B Flat Minor, are brilliant and easily succumbed to. No. 1 of *Op. 41*, in C Sharp Minor, is melancholy and highly effective. No. 2 of *Op. 50*, in A Flat Major, moved Huneker to exclaim that it was "a perfect specimen of the aristocratic Mazurka." And of No. 3 of *Op. 63*, the same sensitive critic wrote: "I defy anyone to withstand the pleading, eloquent voice of this Mazurka." Issued posthumously, the Mazurkas in *Op. 67* are somewhat inferior to the others included here and are apparently earlier pieces. No. 2 of *Op. 68*, with which this collection closes, is far superior.

Of the recording and interpretation, there isn't a great deal to say. The former is adequate, without any particularly distinguishing features, and the latter is only fair. Friedman plays competently, but without the fire and glow of Paderewski or Pachmann or Rosenthal. But it was time for some of the Mazurkas to be gathered into an album.



CHAMBER MUSIC

BRAHMS
C-67915D
to
C-67918D

SONATA IN G MAJOR, Op. 78. Eight sides. Toscha Seidel (Violin) and Arthur Loesser (Piano).
Four 12-inch discs in album. Columbia Set No. 155. \$6.

While the other companies assiduously avoid the field of the Brahms violin sonatas, Columbia makes periodic excursions into that field, and now has all three of these works to grace and distinguish its catalogue—an eloquent tribute to the company's enterprise in giving us recordings of first-rate music. One of Columbia's earliest electrical sets, indeed, was an album containing the Sonata in A Major, Op. 100, played by the same artists who here tackle the Sonata in G Major. Last year Zimbalist's recording of the Sonata in D Minor, Op. 108, the last of the three, was issued. So far as we are aware, these are the only available recordings of Brahms' violin and piano sonatas.

The Sonata in G Major, known occasionally as the *Rain Sonata*, was the first of his works in that form—the first to be published, that is, for he is said to have written several others which he destroyed because he was not satisfied with them. One of Brahms' latest biographers, Richard Specht, has written especially well of the Sonata in G Major, and so it might be profitable to listen to him:

Through this tender, contemplative and gracious Sonata flows the lovely, weary melody of the *Regenlied*; the rhythm of the soft rain thrumming against the windows dominates the whole of the first and last movements, and it is as if he had "only just discovered that a quaver can be dotted," as Elisabeth von Herzogenberg remarks. The first, in a clear, pastoral 6/8 time, runs on steadily in a kind of muted brightness; the last, into whose murmuring accompaniment the dotted quaver figure hammers softly but obstinately and whose melody is mild and relieving, incessantly lulling as a country rain in July, seems as if woven out of sunlight filtered through white mist. . . . It is all transparent and disembodied in a way rarely achieved by the master,—the gossamer of an Indian Summer. He was not often so over-delicate.

Unfortunately, Mr. Seidel's share in the undertaking is not altogether felicitous. Brahms' music, as the quotation above would indicate, is not so stiff and cold and austere that it must be soaked in syrup and then heavily sugared in order to render it palatable, but Mr. Seidel seems to be laboring under some such impression, and accordingly treats us to an overly-sweet and sticky performance. Thus played, Brahms may be made endurable for the rural Culture and Self-Improvement Societies, but such treatment is hardly calculated to warm the hearts of those who don't require company in their enjoyment of the arts. Mr. Seidel's tone, too, is uneven and tends occasionally to be unpleasantly coarse, piercing and flabby. The whole thing, in brief, lacks the fine glow, smoothness and assured strength that characterized Zimbalist's version of the Sonata in D Minor. The recording is not up to Columbia's usual standard.

OPERA



GOUNOD

V-L806

to

V-L825

IMPORTED

FAUST: *Opera in Five Acts.* Forty sides. Artists of the Paris Opéra and Opéra-Comique, Chorus of the Opéra and Orchestra conducted by Henri Busser.
Twenty 12-inch discs in two albums. \$35.

THE CAST

Marguerite.....	Mireille Berthon (Soprano)
Faust.....	César Vezzani (Tenor)
Méphisto.....	Marcel Journet (Bass)
Siebel.....	Marthe Coiffier (Soprano)
Valentin.....	Louis Musy (Baritone)
Dame Marthe.....	Mme. Montfort (Contralto)
Wagner.....	M. Cozette (Bass)

Considering the opera's vast popularity and the wide demand for the many excerpts that have been issued, it is mildly astonishing that it took so long for the recorders to get around to doing Gounod's *Faust* in complete form and sung in the original French. There have, of course, been several more or less satisfactory substitutes, such as the recently issued Polydor abridged album and the English Columbia sixteen-record set. But the former was too short, and the latter, despite many impressive merits, including the fine recording and the lively orchestral accompaniment led by Sir Thomas Beecham, suffered from the fact that it was sung in English. Here, one feels, is the set most opera lovers have been wishing for and perhaps, in their more optimistic and grandiose moments, vaguely expecting sooner or later. It is admirably sung. The orchestra is first-rate. The chorus is excellent. The principals are adequate—in several cases, indeed, considerably more than adequate. And the recording is superlative. Knowing these things, then, it shouldn't require much mental strain for one to decide whether or not he wants *Faust* in complete form on his shelves. It resolves itself into the question as to just how much one likes *Faust*—and how salubrious the condition of the pocketbook.

Requiring twenty records to present the work in nearly complete form, the set thus has the honor of containing more records than any other set ever issued. Its closest rivals, the Victor *Aida* and Columbia *Tristan* (though the latter, of course, is far from complete) sets, each take nineteen records. Of especial interest is the fact that the Walpurgis Night music and the ballet, so often omitted in actual performances, are included here. Thus it would appear that La Voix de Son Maître, the company responsible for these two albums, spared no effort in turning out a notable and arresting set of records, and such actually turns out to be the case.

Most of the cast, a singularly well balanced and competent group of singers, have had recording experience, and the fact that Marcel Journet is present as Mephistopheles insures a convincing rendering of that rôle. The Faust, César Vezzani, has an excellent voice, which he employs with skill and impressive effect,



and Mireille Berthon is satisfactory as Marguerite. Her voice is not always of impeccable quality, but it is surely never disagreeable. The chorus and orchestra are superb, especially the latter, under Henri Busser, whose skilful conducting is one of the finest things about the set. There is little to say of the other members of the cast save that their efforts, collective and individual, contribute toward making this as magnificent an operatic recording as has ever been produced. So far as the performance and recording are concerned, indeed, it ranks with the recently issued *Tannhäuser*.

There are two brief cuts: Pages 179 to 192 (Schirmer piano-vocal score) of Act 3, containing the Entr'acte and Recitative, Marguerite's Spinning-wheel Song, and the scene between Marguerite and Siebel, are omitted. The other cut occurs at the conclusion of the ballet. Beginning with Faust's lines *Vains remords!* on page 264, it extends to page 269, the music beginning again on 270 with Mephistopheles' *Que ton ivresse*. These aren't of much consequence, however, and in no way interfere with the continuity.

THOMAS
C-2447D

MIGNON: (a) *Addio Mignon*; (b) *Ah! non credevi tu*. Two sides. Tommaso Alcaide (Tenor) with orchestra. One 10-inch disc. 75c.

Tommaso Alcaide is said to be arousing almost as much attention in Europe as Lily Pons did in America this past Winter. The recent release of his first records in England attracted wide comment and moved Compton Mackenzie to write in the *Gramophone*: "But I believe that the new Italian tenor Tommaso Alcaide, who made his début in the Columbia list last month, may easily become a gramophone star of the first magnitude. He reminds me of the incomparable Alessandro Bonci, who graced the Columbia list ten years ago. . . ." Singing two numbers from Thomas' *Mignon*, he displays a voice of fine quality and great charm and warmth. Beginning thus favorably, Alcaide should become a fixture in the local Columbia lists. The disc is well recorded.

MOZART
V-V56060

DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE: *Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen*. One side and
DON GIOVANNI: *Reich mir die Hand, mein Leben*. One side. Elisabeth van Endert (Soprano) and Gerhard Pechner (Bari-tone) with Berlin State Opera Orchestra. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

This attractive disc comes from the current Victor German list, and its merits are such that it deserves more widespread attention than it is likely to receive buried in that supplement. The artists are unfamiliar, but their work is highly commendable, as is that of the accompanying Berlin State Opera Orchestra.

GOUNOD
BIZET
V-7389

FAUST: Act 2—*Salut demeure*. (Gounod) One side and
CARMEN: Act 2—*Air de la Fleur*. (Bizet) One side. Giacomo Lauri-Volpi (Tenor) with orchestra. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Lauri-Volpi's pleasing tenor is heard to excellent advantage in both of these numbers. The disc is well recorded, and there is a first-rate orchestral accompaniment, that in the *Faust* number being especially good.

DONIZETTI

C-GQX10064

to

C-GQX10068

IMPORTED

LA FAVORITA: *Opera in Four Acts (Abridged)*. Ten sides.
Italian Operatic Artists, La Scala Chorus and Milan Symphony
Orchestra conducted by Lorenzo Molajoli.
Five 12-inch discs in album. \$10.

**THE CAST**

Leonora di Gusman.....Giuseppina Zinetti
Fernando.....Cristy Solari
Alfonso XI.....Carmelo Maugeri
Baldassarre.....Corrado Zambelli
Ines.....Ida Mannarini
Don Gasparo.....Giuseppe Nessi

The ideal of completeness is a laudable one and should thus be held constantly before the manufacturers, but there are certain cases where a discreetly pruned and whittled down recording is infinitely more effective and endurable than a bulky album containing the whole work. *La Favorita* is one of these cases. A complete recording of the opera would be a formidable set to negotiate, and one would have to be an extraordinarily enthusiastic opera lover—content always to accept and believe and never to doubt—in order to attempt it. So that it is hardly likely that many will protest because this album does not give us a complete, or anything like a complete, version of the work.

But it does offer a brief, well-chosen group of excerpts, so selected and put together as to give a fairly plausible resumé of the opera. The work was first produced at the Grand Opéra, Paris, in 1840, and New York heard it eight years later. Since then, no one, so far as we are aware, has complained that the opera has been neglected.

It is a pity that better singers weren't engaged for this recording, for *Favorita* is the sort of work whose success depends largely upon the quality of the voices. The cast assembled here is full of enthusiasm and sings with plenty of vigor and gusto, but the voices are very colorless and commonplace. Ida Mannarini's, however, is an exception, and her singing and the playing of the Milan Symphony Orchestra constitute the features of the set. The choral work, contributed by La Scala Chorus, is excellent, and the recording calls for high praise.

SULLIVAN

V-9937

to

V-9945

H. M. S. PINAFORE: *Comic Opera in Two Acts*. (Gilbert-Sullivan) Eighteen sides. Henry A. Lytton, George Baker, Charles Goulding, Darrell Fancourt, Elsie Griffin, Nellie Briercliffe, Bertha Lewis, with Chorus and Symphony Orchestra conducted by Malcolm Sargent.
Nine 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set C-13. \$13.50.

Pinafore, *Iolanthe* and *Patience*, if only for the vastly improved recording evident in them, unquestionably stand at the top of the H. M. V. Gilbert and Sullivan series. Just how far electrical recording has advanced in the past few years can be easily demonstrated by comparing the *Mikado* set, which was issued several years ago, with any of the three mentioned above. Victor has already issued *Iolanthe*, and



now the release of *Pinafore* makes generally available in America a superb recording of one of the best-liked Gilbert and Sullivan products. It is to be hoped that *Patience*, too, will shortly be repressed.

The imported pressings of *Pinafore* were reviewed on page 468 of the January issue. As was hinted in that notice, the set is recorded with extraordinary skill and the performance comes perilously close to perfection.

KÁLMÁN
PD-95397
to
PD-95400
IMPORTED

THE GYPSY PRINCESS: *Abridged Operetta*. Eight sides.
Soloists, Chorus and Orchestra of the Berlin State Opera conducted by Hermann Weigert. Four 12-inch discs in album. \$7.50.

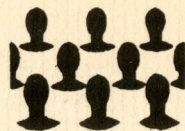
It was only a few months ago when a great many mild grumblings were heard concerning the lack of records of good light music. Symphonic, chamber and operatic music, it was argued, could be had in great quantities and variety, and new additions were constantly being added to the catalogues. But salient releases of good light music were few and far between. Things in this line have picked up somewhat during the past few months. Victor's export list has brought forward several good Spanish zarzuelas and a Léhar operetta, and now Polydor turns to Emmerich Kálmán for its latest abridged opera. The field of light music, though still insufficiently covered, at least shows some signs of being recognized by the manufacturers.

Kálmán is a Hungarian and was born at Siófok in 1882. He now lives in Vienna, where he makes frequent contributions to the type of operetta made famous by that city. Like Léhar, Kálmán has an apparently inexhaustible supply of full, round, immensely agreeable melodies on hand, and a good many of them can be found in the *Gypsy Princess*. The plot of the piece is a conventional one, and need not be outlined here, since it is fully described in the booklet which accompanies the album.

The principal objection that can be made to the set is that it contains entirely too much spoken dialogue. Messrs. Wiegert and Maeder, who are responsible for the work in its abridged form, obviously tried to get too much on the eight record sides allotted to them. We could very easily have dispensed with the talking and had more of Kálmán's spirited music. As it is, one no sooner leans back to enjoy a rousing tune than the thing stops and a terrific clatter of conversation starts. This may be all right for those who understand German—though even they would probably tire of it after the first hearing,—but those not familiar with the language need a good deal of patience to endure it.

Aside from this, though, the whole thing is admirably done. The cast is excellent, and includes, incidentally, Adele Kern and Felicie Hüni-Mihacsek, who has lately been heard in some Mozart recordings issued by Brunswick. The chorus and orchestra, from the Berlin State Opera, perform with the needed spirit and gusto, and the recording is very good.

CHORAL



PLAINSONG

V-C2087

and

V-C2088

IMPORTED

PLAINSONG: (a) *Asperges Me*; (b) *Kyrie Eleison* from *Mass No. IX "Cum Jubilo"*; (c) *Versicles and Responses before the Preface*; (d) *Sanctus and Benedictus* from *Mass No. IX "Cum Jubilo"*; (e) *Salve Regina (Simple Tone)*; (f) *Second Alleluia and Verse for Pentecost*; (g) *Sequence for Pentecost*; (h) *Compline—Antiphon and Psalm "Ecce Nunc"*; (i) *Compline—Hymn "Te Lucis"*; (j) *Ave Regina Coelorum (Simple Tone)*; (k) *Hymn—"O Salutaris Hostia."* Four sides. The Schola of Ampleforth Abbey conducted by J. B. McElligott.

Two 12-inch discs. \$1.75 each.

To many musicians, creative as well as interpretative, Plainsong is still largely a closed book. Even Church musicians are often painfully unaware of the peculiar beauties of the musical system which was the exclusive basis of the Church's song for at least a thousand years. Of course, it is well known that many modern composers have used Plainsong in their works, and it is being taught more and more in schools, but still there remains a considerable prejudice against it, which, like most prejudices, must be laid to ignorance. To ears attuned only to the seductiveness and sensuous charm of such music of the theatre as flowed from the pen of a Verdi or a Gounod, or which delight in being titillated by a Victorian part-song, Plainsong seems crude and barbarous. But to the soul seeking surcease from the storm and stress of life this music comes like a benison, lifting one above the tumult to cool regions of calm swept only by the breath of God.

Hearing the selection of these melodies given us last year by the monks of Solesmes and now another by the monks of Ampleforth, one must indeed be impervious to beauty not to feel devoutly thankful to those who have made such a refreshing experience possible.

It is manifestly impossible in this notice to comment very fully upon the selections here recorded. They include the antiphon, Psalm verse and Gloria used at the sprinkling of Holy Water before Mass, the *Kyrie*, *Sanctus*, and *Benedictus* from the Ordinary (fixed part) of the Mass, sung to the beautiful "Cum Jubilo" setting, and the Versicles and Responses before the Preface of the Mass sung to the ancient solemn tone. From the Proper (variable part) of the Mass for the feast of Pentecost, there is the ornate second *Alleluia* with its verse, and the Sequence—*Veni Sancte Spiritus*. Selections from the Compline Office include Psalm 133—*Ecce Nunc*—with its antiphon, the hymn—*Te Lucis*, and two of the four anthems of the Blessed Virgin Mary—*Salve Regina* and *Ave Regina Coelorum*. St. Thomas Aquinas' hymn—*O Salutaris Hostia*—used at Benediction, is sung at the end.

HERBERT BOYCE SATCHER

Recent Victor Releases

MUSICAL MASTERPIECE

Suite from the Music to "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme," by Richard Strauss. Performed by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Clemens Krauss. On four double-faced Victor Records Nos. 9917-9920. In automatic sequence, Nos. 9921-9924. In Album M-101, with explanatory booklet. List price, \$6.50.

For the Strauss fan here is a charming morsel! Lovely music touched with the subtleties that are characteristic of the composer . . . veiled hints which give the listener the intimate sensation of being in on a secret. You will enjoy owning this music, arranged as an orchestral suite by Strauss himself, and get a thrill out of the experience of the hero.

CONCERT SERIES

H.M.S. Pinafore by Gilbert and Sullivan. Performed by the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company on nine double-faced Victor Records, Nos. 9937-9945. In automatic sequence, Nos. 9946-9954. In Album C-13, with libretto. List price, \$13.50.

This popular Gilbert and Sullivan opera has been recorded by the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company under the personal supervision of Rupert D'Oyly Carte. So authoritative an interpretation can only be rivalled by an actual performance of these artists and this reproduction is so splendid that hearing the records gives you the exact feeling of witnessing the opera. For real musical relaxation and thorough enjoyment this tuneful music is absolutely without a peer.

RED SEAL RECORDS

En Saga and Valse Triste by Sibelius. Played by Eugene Goossens and Symphony Orchestra. On two double-faced Victor Records Nos. 9925-9926. List Price, \$1.50 each.

Faust—Salut demeure (Gounod) and *Carmen—Air de la fleur* (Bizet). Sung with orchestral accompaniment by

Giacomo Lauri-Volpi. On Victor Record No. 7389. List price, \$2.00.

Spring Song (Mendelssohn) and *Murmuring Zephyrs* (Jensen). Piano Solo by Rudolph Ganz, played on Victor Record No. 1508. List price, \$1.50.



R C A VICTOR COMPANY, Inc.
Camden, New Jersey

A Radio Corporation of America Subsidiary

BACH

V-9955

to

V-9971

MASS IN B MINOR. Thirty-four sides. Elisabeth Schumann (Soprano), Margaret Balfour (Contralto), Walter Widdop (Tenor), Friedrich Schorr (Baritone) and Philharmonic Choir with London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. Seventeen 12-inch discs in two albums. Victor Set M-104. \$25.50.



Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 959.

With a shelf of albums that already contains a good portion of the *Ring*, including a very generous slice of *Götterdämmerung*, as well as over a hundred other masterpieces and near masterpieces, the Victor Musical Masterpiece series gains enormously in impressiveness, dignity and value with this issue of the B Minor Mass. In noticing it the temptation to resort to the super, de luxe adjectives with which every new product of Hollywood is hailed is almost unavoidable. One of the most ambitious attempts in recording history, as well as one of the most successfully carried out, the usefulness of these records to music lovers can scarcely be calculated. Chances to hear the B Minor Mass are at best infrequent, and news of a forthcoming performance is something to stir and fever music lovers from far and wide. Now, as the old commonplace goes, you can hear it in your own home, with ample opportunity for extended study. The imported H. M. V. pressings of the work arrived in this country a little over a year ago, and served as the subject of the feature article of the first issue of *Disques* (March, 1930). Readers are accordingly referred to that issue for comment on the work and the recording. It is only necessary to say here that neither Coates nor any of the artists who assist him in this set has ever done more valuable recording work.

SINIGAGLIA

C-CQ353

IMPORTED

LA PASTORA FEDELE: *Canzone piemontese*. One side and
IL CACCIATORE DEL BOSCO: *Canzone piemontese*. One
side. La Scala Chorus conducted by Vittore Veneziani.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

Leone Sinigaglia's Overture to *Le Baruffe Chiozzotte*, a delightful work and an equally delightful record, was reviewed on page 170 of the July, 1930, issue of *Disques*, where a brief note on the composer will be found. Sinigaglia is a modern Italian composer, but his works have been much influenced by Dvorák and Goldmark. The songs and dances of the Piedmont section in Italy have also furnished him with material for many of his works. These choral pieces, beautifully rendered by the large and impeccably drilled La Scala Chorus, are very effective.

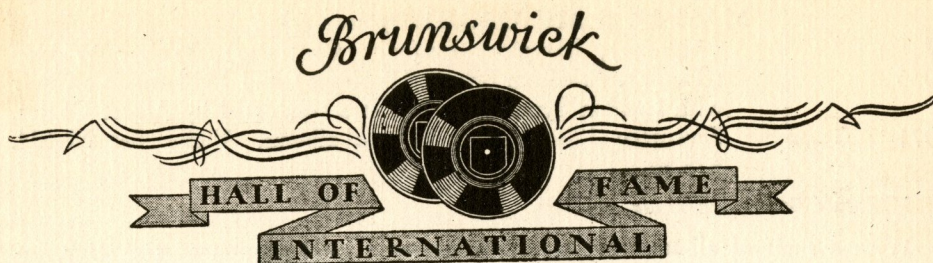
EULENBURG

PA-E11060

IMPORTED

ROSE SONGS: (1) *Monthly Roses*; (2) *Briar Roses*; (3) *Ram-
bler Roses*; (4) *Water Roses*. Two sides. Emmy Bettendorf
(Soprano), Hans Clemens (Tenor), Chorus and Orchestra con-
ducted by O. Dobrindt. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Philipp zu Eulenburg was born in Königsberg in 1847. From 1894 to 1904 he was the German ambassador at Vienna. Among his works are several sets of songs. The *Rose Songs* are quiet, charming and melodious, and Hans Clemens, who appeared with the Metropolitan this year, and Emmy Bettendorf sing them beautifully. A chorus and orchestra support them effectively.



RELEASES FOR THE MONTH OF
JUNE

Album
No. 30
90150 to
90154
incl.

- | | | |
|----------------|--|--|
| | DVORÁK —SYMPHONY NO. 5—E MINOR—Opus 95
"From the New World"—Five records
THE STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, BERLIN
ERICH KLEIBER, Conductor | Recorded in Europe
PRICE \$7.50
Compl. with Album |
| 90155
90156 | BRAHMS —ACADEMIC FESTIVAL OVERTURE—3 Parts
THE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, BERLIN
JULIUS PRÜWER, Conductor | Recorded in Europe
PRICE
Complete \$3.00 |
| 90157 | BERLIOZ —RAKÓCZY MARCH
BERLIOZ —THE DAMNATION OF FAUST — Minuet of
the Will-O'-the-Wisps—Dance of the Sylphs
LAMOUREUX ORCHESTRA, PARIS
ALBERT WOLFF, Conductor | Recorded in Europe
PRICE \$1.50 |
| 90158 | DEBUSSY — NOCTURNE NO. 1: — NUAGES (Clouds) | Recorded in Europe
PRICE \$1.50 |
| 90159 | DEBUSSY — NOCTURNE NO. 2: — FÊTES (Festivals)
LAMOUREUX ORCHESTRA, PARIS
ALBERT WOLFF, Conductor | Recorded in Europe
PRICE \$1.50 |
| 90160 | HANDEL — OCHS — CANTATA CON STROMENTI
Aria (Dank Sei Dir, Herr)—in German
HANDEL — REINHARD — LARGO AND RECITATIVE
FROM "XERXES"
Contralto Solo in Italian—Orch. Accom.— EMMI LEISNER | Recorded in Europe
PRICE \$1.50 |
| 85003 | SCHUMANN —ES ZOGEN ZWEI RUST'GE GESELLEN
(Spring Wandering)
HUMPERDINCK —AM RHEIN—
(On the Banks of the Rhine)
Baritone Solo in German—Sung by HEINRICH SCHLUSNUS | Recorded in Europe
PRICE \$1.25 |

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VOCAL



TSCHAIKOWSKY
PD-66999
IMPORTED

WANN ICH DAS GEWUHT, Op. 47, No. 1. One side and
WAR ICH NICHT EIN FRISCHES GRASLEIN, Op. 47,
No. 7. One side. Xenia Belmas (Soprano) with piano accom-
paniment by Alexander Kitschin. One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

LISZT
PD-27203
IMPORTED

DIE DREI ZIGEUNER. One side and
O KOMM IM TRAUM. One side. Theodore Scheidl (Bari-
tone) with piano accompaniment by Franz Rupp.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

TIERSOT
C-BF1
IMPORTED

LE PAUVRE LABOUREUR: (*Chanson populaire Bressanne*).
One side and
LE RETOUR DU MARIN: (*Chanson populaire Poitevine*).
One side. Reynaldo Hahn (Tenor) with piano accompaniment.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

TAILLEFERRE
C-LF53
IMPORTED

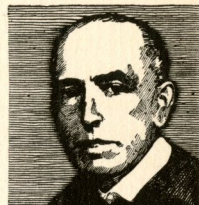
SIX CHANSONS FRANCAISES. Two sides. Jane Bathori
(Mezzo-Soprano) with piano accompaniment by Germaine Tail-
leferre. One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

Good vocal records have been rather scarce the last couple of months, but here is an admirable batch, full of variety and wide contrasts. Although he was a prolific song writer—over a hundred such works are included in the list of his compositions—not many of Tschaikowsky's vocal compositions have been recorded. Many of them are marred by excessive development of inferior ideas, many suffer because they are set to poor words, and many are too sentimental. But there are some good ones among them, and they deserve recording. The two given here, from the seven songs that comprise Op. 47, are not among the finest of his works in that form, but in spite of their showiness and empty dramatics they have a fascination hard to resist. Xenia Belmas' colorless and strained interpretation makes it easier. The very life-like and well-recorded piano accompaniment is the feature of the disc. . . . Like Tschaikowsky, Liszt left a quantity of songs that have been more or less ignored by the recorders. *O komm im Traum* is a beautiful work, and Scheidl's rich baritone is heard to excellent advantage in it. *Die drei Zigeuner* is dramatic and fiery, and Scheidl is equally successful with it. Here, too, there is a superb piano accompaniment, recorded with fine realism. . . . Julien Tiersot, French musicologist and composer, was born in Bourg (Ain) in 1857. He studied under Massenet, Franck and Savard. From 1883 to 1919 he was librarian of the Conservatory. He has gathered many of the folk songs and tunes—his *Mélodies populaires des provinces de France* run to eight volumes—of the French provinces, and these valuable collections constitute an important part

COLUMBIA MASTERWORKS*

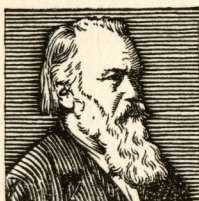
—New Issues—

DE FALLA NIGHTS IN THE GARDENS OF SPAIN. The vogue of Manuel de Falla, most eminent representative of the modern school of Spanish music and possibly the most distinguished musician now composing, increases daily in this country. This, his most characteristic work of impressionism, is an authentic modern masterpiece. Elusive and evasive, the treatment of its themes is extraordinarily effective and ingenious—there is almost to be felt the scented, languorous breath of a Spanish summer evening. The recording was done in old Seville, heart of the Spain of romance, conducted by one of De Falla's most gifted pupils.



COLUMBIA MASTERWORKS SET No. 156

De Falla: Nights in the Gardens of Spain (Noches en los Jardines de España). Suite for Piano and Orchestra. By Ernesto Halffter, conducting Orquesta Bética de Cámara (Seville); Manuel Navarro at the Piano. In Six Parts, on Three 12-Inch Records. \$4.50 with album.



BRAHMS SONATA IN G MAJOR, OP. 78, FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO.

The first violin sonata of Brahms is of particular interest for the violin enthusiast, since in the opinion of many eminent players it is the best work this well-loved master ever composed for the combination of violin and piano. For the amateur appreciator of delightful music it is filled with beautiful and understandable melodies, assigned alternately to violin and piano, varying in character and tempo with the character of the different movements. Its recording by Toscha Seidel and Arthur Loesser is one of the best things yet done by these famous artists.

COLUMBIA MASTERWORKS SET No. 155

Brahms: Sonata in G Major, Op. 78, for Violin and Piano. By Toscha Seidel and Arthur Loesser. In Eight Parts, on Four 12-Inch Records. \$6.00 with album.

DE FALLA CONCERTO FOR HARPISCHORD, FLUTE, OBOE, CLARINET, VIOLIN AND VIOLONCELLO. The great De Falla himself plays the harpischord in this charming little concerto for that ancient instrument and chamber orchestra. While seemingly ultra modern in effect, the essentials of this composition are said to hark back to a Spanish musical tradition almost of the Dark Ages, or at least of the time of the Crusades. Composed in 1926, it is almost the only example of modern composition existing for the harpischord. The recording is magnificently executed, and should be of intense interest for all in search of new musical sensations.

De Falla: Concerto for Harpischord, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Violin and Violoncello. Manuel de Falla at the Harpischord; M.M. Moyse (Flute), Bonneau (Oboe), Godeau (Clarinet), Darrieux (Violin), Cruque (Cello). In Four Parts. Columbia Record Nos. 67922D—67923D, \$2.00 each.



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Columbia Phonograph Co., Inc., New York City



"Magic Notes"

of his work. *Le Retour du Marin* is a gay little melody, with a lively swing, and it is sung in just the proper spirit by Reynaldo Hahn, who conducted the Padeloup Orchestra in a Mozart Piano Concerto reviewed in the May issue. *Le Pauvre Laboureur* is an appealing, plaintive piece, well sung and recorded. In both of these numbers Hahn provides his own piano accompaniment. . . . Mme. Taileferre will be remembered for her part in the Scarlatti Sonata for Flute and Strings, reviewed in the December issue. This group of six French songs contains some charming pieces, revealing excellent taste and sensibility. One would never suspect from this disc that the composer is a member of the Group of Six. The songs are beautifully sung by Jane Bathori, and the accompaniment is supplied by the composer. The titles of the songs are: *Non, la fidélité* (with words of Lataignant—eighteenth century); *Souvent un air de vérité* (words by Voltaire); *Mon mari m'a diffamée* (fifteenth century words); *Vrai Dieu qui m'y confortera* (fifteenth century words); *On a dit du mal de mon ami* (fifteenth century words); *Les trois présents* (words of Sarasin—seventeenth century).



**HUMPER-
DINCK
SCHUMANN**
B-85003

AM RHEIN: *On the Banks of the Rhine.* (Humperdinck) One side and
ES ZOGEN ZWEI RÜST'GE GESELLEN (*Spring Wandering*). (Schumann) One side. Heinrich Schlusnus (Baritone) with piano accompaniment.

Brunswick is not letting Schlusnus' fine Polydor records gather any dust on the shelf, and nearly every month sees the release of one of these singularly fine vocal discs. The two numbers given here were reviewed on page 147 of the June, 1930, issue.

HANDEL
B-90160

LARGO AND RECITATIVE from "*Xerxes*." (Handel-Reinhard) One side and
CANTATA CON STROMENTI: *Dank Sei Dir, Herr.* (Handel-Ochs) One side. Emmi Leisner (Contralto) with organ and orchestral accompaniment. One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

Emmi Leisner has a voice of commanding power, and in both these Handel numbers, which have very full and powerful accompaniments, there is the proper breadth and sweep. The recording is very good.

VOLONCELLO



**FAURÉ
RAVEL**
C-2446D

APRES UN REVE. (Fauré-Casals) One side and
PIÈCE EN FORME DE HABANERA. (Ravel) One side.
Maurice Maréchal (Violoncello) with piano accompaniment.
One 10-inch disc. 75c.

Both of these numbers have been recorded before. Maréchal, whose records seem to be regular features now on the Columbia lists, plays them skilfully, and the piano accompaniment and recording are admirably achieved.

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**BACH
PERGOLESI**
C-2443D

ADAGIO. (Bach-Siloti) One side and
ARIETTA. (Pergolesi-Fachiri) One side. Yelly d'Aranyi (Violin) with piano accompaniment by Arthur Bergh.
One 10-inch disc. 75c.

The Bach Adagio, which is from the Toccata in C Major, though the label forgets to tell us so, has been recorded several times and in various ways—for organ by Stanley Roper (H. M. V.), for violoncello by Pablo Casals (Victor), and for viola by Lionel Tertis (Columbia). This, however, appears to be the first violin recording of the piece. Miss d'Aranyi plays it beautifully, but the deeper and richer tones of the 'cello or viola seem better adapted to the music. . . . Felix Salmond issued a record of Pergolesi's *Tre Giorni* last Summer, and a note on the composer was included in the September *Disques*, when the record was reviewed. The Arietta given here is an engaging piece, played with splendid skill and verve. The recording is first-rate, as is Arthur Bergh's piano accompaniment.

MISCELLANEOUS



**GODARD
GENIN**
O-165.853
IMPORTED

IDYLLE. (B. Godard) One side and
FANTAISIE *avec variations sur un air Napolitain*. (Genin) One side. Marcel Moyse (Flute) with piano accompaniment.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

DELMAS
O-165.888
IMPORTED

FANTAISIE ITALIENNE. Two sides. Louis Cahuzac (Clarinet) with piano accompaniment. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

The music that Moyse and Cahuzac render here is negligible, serving only to give the soloists an opportunity to display their talents. Both are first-rate performers. The recording is none too carefully done.

BLONDIAU
O-170.115
IMPORTED

MESSE SOLENNELLE DE SAINT HUBERT. (arr. Blondiau) Two sides. Rallye Trompes de France conducted by Raymond Dray, with organ accompaniment by Maurice Fauré.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

The Cor de chasse or hunting horn is a simple harmonic horn in D, similar to other horns, but less carefully made and without pistons or crooks. The instrument is seldom used, though Méhul makes use of it in his Overture to *Le jeune Henri*, where it is employed with picturesque effect in rendering a fanfare. Here, however, we have a group of Cors de chasse, with organ accompaniment. Their tone is rather coarse and raucous, and the disc should be of scant interest to any save those seriously interested in the instrument. The recording is very good.

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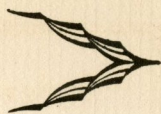
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CORRESPONDENCE



Recording Suggestion

Editor, *Disques*:

Finding myself slain by two correspondents in your April issue, I shall not cause undue embarrassment by rising from the dead and making answer. However, as a blushing ghost, I suggest, in properly sepulchral tones, that all this sound and fury be phonographically recorded. An acoustically perfect rendition of the anathemas hurled at my "Exit the Interpreter" in your March issue would certainly entertain all music lovers of the next century. I am (or, at least, was)

WINTHROP PARKHURST

Atlantic City, N. J.

More Recorded American Music

Editor, *Disques*:

Mr. Charles Sanford Skilton, the American composer, has kindly called my attention to recordings of his works which I should like to add to the list of American Recorded Music in the April number of *Disques*. These compositions are being played in concerts and broadcasts, and the records would be a valuable part of the one hour of American music for which I was asking in my article.

They are: *Deer Dance* and *Gambling Song* (V-35749). Played by the Victor Concert Orchestra. *Sioux Flute Serenade* and *War Dance* (V-19556). Played by the Victor Concert Orchestra. *Shawnee Indian Hunting Dance* and *War Dance* (V-22144). *Deer Dance* (V-22174).

DOROTHY E. NICHOLS

Palo Alto, Cal.

MacDowell and Carpenter Recordings

Editor, *Disques*:

Hard on the heels of the publication of Miss Nichol's "At Least One Hour" in the April *Disques*, I wrote to the RCA Victor Company in approbation of it. I stressed particularly the lack of recordings of MacDowell and John Alden Carpenter. Their prompt and most courteous reply was, in substance, that they had been restricted in recording many compositions of great merit

through the fear that on account of the slight knowledge of these compositions by the mass of record-buyers, the sales would not, in any way, justify the expense of recording. They added that their main source of information as to recordings that were wanted came from the requests of dealers and inquiries received through the mail from those interested. They added that they had not, up to this time, noticed any great interest in these composers.

They have, in a measure, thrown down the gauntlet, and it behooves those of us who want these recordings to ask for them—or do without. I, for one, want them badly enough to ask the readers of *Disques* who are interested in these and other American composers to write to Mr. Robert E. Smith, of the Victor Company, at 153 E. 24th Street, New York, immediately, and express your desires, for it is only by this means that we may hope to have MacDowell and the others made "Worthy of one hour." Will you not write at once?

J. C. HARRIS

Ferguson, Mo.

Recorded Concerts Guild

Editor, *Disques*:

Through the columns of this journal, I wish to announce the formation of the Recorded Concerts Guild, to be entirely supported by its members. Its initial program is the giving of about fifteen regulation concerts of symphonic and chamber music, as well as a complete oratorio and other items, in a small auditorium, the records to be played through an electrical instrument and in such manner that the flow of music will be continuous, eliminating the old handicap of turning record sides. This will be a happy medium between home performances and those in the concert halls. Programs will be of the finest type.

Lack of space forbids my giving further details, but I urge all lovers of good recorded music, residing in Greater New York, to write at once to the undersigned at 625 Madison Avenue, 7th Floor, New York, N. Y., and complete information regarding programs, membership fee, etc., will be given.

EMIL V. BENEDICT

New York, N. Y.

BOOKS

OUR AMERICAN MUSIC: *Three Hundred Years of It*. By John Tasker Howard. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company. \$6.

This bulky volume contains 624 pages of text and 88 pages of appendices and indices. It may therefore be taken for granted that Mr. Howard's enthusiasm and interest for American music are somewhat more than considerable. Nor does he allow his feelings as an American to sway his judgments—not, at all events, to any excessive degree. His enthusiasm is generally tempered with a discerning critical sense, and so one finds very little undeserved boosting of mediocrities in his pages. A slightly more critical attitude might in some respects have made the volume a more valuable one. But then if Mr. Howard's attitude had been throughout that of the relentless, brutal critic—which, of course, is the only sound and really effective critical attitude—one would soon have grown weary of reading his pages; nearly 600 of them smeared with synonyms of the word "bad" would not make for particularly exhilarating reading. Mr. Howard, moreover, covers such an enormous amount of ground and presents so much information not generally accessible elsewhere that much can be forgiven him. He at all events deals out sharp blows as well as backslaps, and if at times the former seem too mild and the latter too cordial and frequent, it must be remembered that in all likelihood Mr. Howard needed some sort of stimulant to sustain him in his labors, and the delusion that he was dealing with first-rate men may have comforted him in his darker hours.

American music unfortunately lacks salient personalities to color and make gaudy its history. It seems to be commonly agreed that we have no one to match Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Brahms, Wagner, Richard Strauss, Debussy and Stravinsky. If we have, then he is assuredly not receiving the appreciation properly due him, and this department hastily presents its apologies. So that a history of American music, which in other words is largely a history of third-raters and appalling incompetents, is bound to make rather colorless, flabby reading. Thus personalities like that of Louis Antoine Jullien (1812-1860), the forerunner of modern prima donna conductors, help immensely in giving zest and

bounce to the not too fascinating story.

Jullien, Mr. Howard says, "could almost have taught Barnum some tricks, and maybe he did, though he did not come here until three years after Jenny Lind. His father was a band master, and the son was familiar with instruments and music from the cradle.

His aim was always to popularize music, and to do this he used the largest band, the best performers, and the most attractive pieces. When he had attained vogue, he played whole symphonies on a program, and sometimes two in an evening. Jullien would have made a fortune in our movie palaces. Almost eighty years ago he did what our movie conductors do to-day—presented music with showmanship.

But his most successful trick was his performance of a piece called *Night* or the *Firemen's Quadrille*. "Before the *Firemen's Quadrille* commenced, the audience was warned that something unusual might happen. Jullien loved to spring a surprise, but a lot of fainting women might be too much of a good thing. Wiping his brow with his gorgeous silk handkerchief, he arose from his throne and faced his men. The piece started quietly, like a nocturne or lullaby. A hush through the house made the suspense more thrilling. Then the music picked up a bit, the violins fluttered as they told of the awesome mystery of darkness. You could almost see ghosts. Suddenly the clang of firebells was heard outside. Flames burst from the ceiling. Three companies of firemen rushed in, dragging their hoses behind them. Real water poured from the nozzles, glass was broken. Some of the women fainted, and the ushers were rushing here and there yelling that it was all part of the show. And all the while the orchestra was playing at a tremendous fortissimo." All this was in 1853. By comparison Mr. Stokowski's scolding of his clients and Mr. Toscanini's thriftless snapping of batons seem but trivial.

Mr. Howard has a good deal to say that is interesting about modern American composers, and his estimates often reveal shrewdness and originality of thought. An invaluable reference work, the volume is carefully indexed and lavishly illustrated.

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